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# Finland in the Anglo-American Press, 1939-1955: A Special Case?

John M. Pederson

# FINLAND IN THE ANGLO-AMERICAN PRESS, 1939-1955: A SPECIAL CASE?

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John M. Pederson
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To Traci, my favorite Finn

ABSTRACT

The West's image of Finland and its policy towards Finland during World War II and the Cold War has been thought to be an exception to the framework of power politics and diplomacy. This thesis will seek to determine the validity of this assumption in the United States and Great Britain by examining the popular press of each country. This thesis will also explore what differences if any existed between the Anglo and American press. This thesis will attempt to understand the analysis, judgments, and opinions of the Anglo and American press regrading Finland and their impressions as to what the appropriate responses of Great Britain and the United States should be towards Finland. This thesis discusses how accurate their observations and assessments were and within that context determines whether or not Finland can be considered a special case.

The Winter War between Finland and the Soviet Union was widely covered in the Anglo and American press. The foremost common theme was an almost universal sympathy and admiration for the Finns. The press response to Finland was due partly, but not exclusively, to its sentiment toward the Soviet Union. The Winter War created the image of "Valiant Finland," with the press portraying Finland as a defender of Western Civilization, particularly democracy and Christianity. The Winter War and the press coverage of it created a substantial reservoir of goodwill for Finland. This combined with Finland's already positive image as an honest debt paying nation.

During the Continuation War Finland fought as a co-belligerent of Nazi Germany against the Soviet Union, but only to regain the territory it lost in the Winter War. Finland was trapped in a tricky geopolitical and diplomatic situation. As the war continued the Anglo and American press became more and more critical of Finland's role, but distinguished between the actions of the Finnish government and the Finnish people. After World War II the Anglo and American press paid little attention to daily life in Finland. The events that brought attention to Finland were often events in which Finland appeared to be exceptional when compared to other nations thought to be in similar circumstances. Finland's image evolved through the years. The Anglo and American press recognized Finland as a functioning democracy, but they did not altogether regard Finland as neutral. The press stressed the image of "Honest Finland" as the Finns completed their reparation payments to the Soviet Union in 1952. The press described Finland as a democratic nation that shared Western values but that circumstances did not allow it to exercise a pro-West foreign policy.

Although the United States and Great Britain were allies in World War II and the Cold War, some differences occurred in their respective coverage of Finland, as their national interests diverged. Given the geopolitical reality that placed Finland in political alignments that did not support British and American interests, the Anglo and American press coverage of Finland revealed an unmistakable reservoir of goodwill and sympathy for the Finnish people. The Anglo and American press coverage of Finland between 1939 and 1955 was indeed an exception to the conventional framework of power politics and diplomacy. Finland was a special case.

# I. INTRODUCTION

*The powerful exact what they can*
*and the weak grant what they must.*
Thucydides[1]

Geography has been unkind to Finland, and remains today perhaps the single most defining factor of Finnish daily life and its national existence. Not only is the northern climate frequently inhospitable and the rocky soil poor, Finland's location on the northwestern flank of Russia or the Soviet Union has inextricably tied its fate to the security concerns and expansionist policies of its powerful neighbor. Finland's traumatic history since independence in 1917 is a fascinating example of a small power trying to survive between antagonistic great powers: first between Germany and the Soviet Union during World War II and then during the Cold War between the western democracies, led by the United States, and the Soviet Union.[2] During this period Finland was twice defeated by the Soviet Union yet remained an unoccupied and independent nation. As a result of the Winter War and the Continuation War, Finland was left with large reparation payments owed to the Soviet Union and much of its territory lost or

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[1] Thucydices, *The Peloponnesian Wars*, as cited in Ernst Breisach, *Historiography: Ancient, Medieval, and Modern*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), 16.

[2] For a description of Finland's history prior to the Winter War see John Wuorinen, *A History of Finland* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1965), for a concise recent history of Finland see Fred Singleton, *A Short History of Finland*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), and for an understanding of Finland within the context of Scandinavia see Thomas Derry, *A History of Scandinavia*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1979).

destroyed.[3] After World War II the Finns pursued a policy of peaceful relations with the Soviet Union. By the end of 1955 the Soviet Union had agreed to withdraw from its military base in Finnish territory, and tacitly consented to Finland's joining the United Nations and the Nordic Council. These events marked the attainment of Finland's foreign policy goal: to pursue a course of neutrality that was legitimately accepted by both the West and the East.[4] Yet if Thucydides' dictum (above) remains an absolute tenant of the relations between nations then there would be little point in studying the history of Finland or any other small power, except for personal curiosity, for there would be nothing more to learn about the relations between the powerful and the weak. History, as life, is seldom that simple, as Finland's experience between 1939 and 1955 demonstrates. This experience raises the question as to what extent Finland, or any small power, can influence its future by its own actions and to what extent its fate rests upon the whims of great powers.

Finland was certainly a unique case, a democracy fighting against an enemy of Nazi Germany, the Soviet Union during World War II and surviving afterwards to be the only democracy to border the Soviet Union in Europe during the Cold War. Classifying Finland strictly as either an ally of the Western democracies or a Soviet satellite was problematic, but it was equally difficult for Finland to be accepted as strictly neutral. Though Finland's government often appeared to be on the wrong side of the issues according to the preferences of the United States and Great Britain, the Finns

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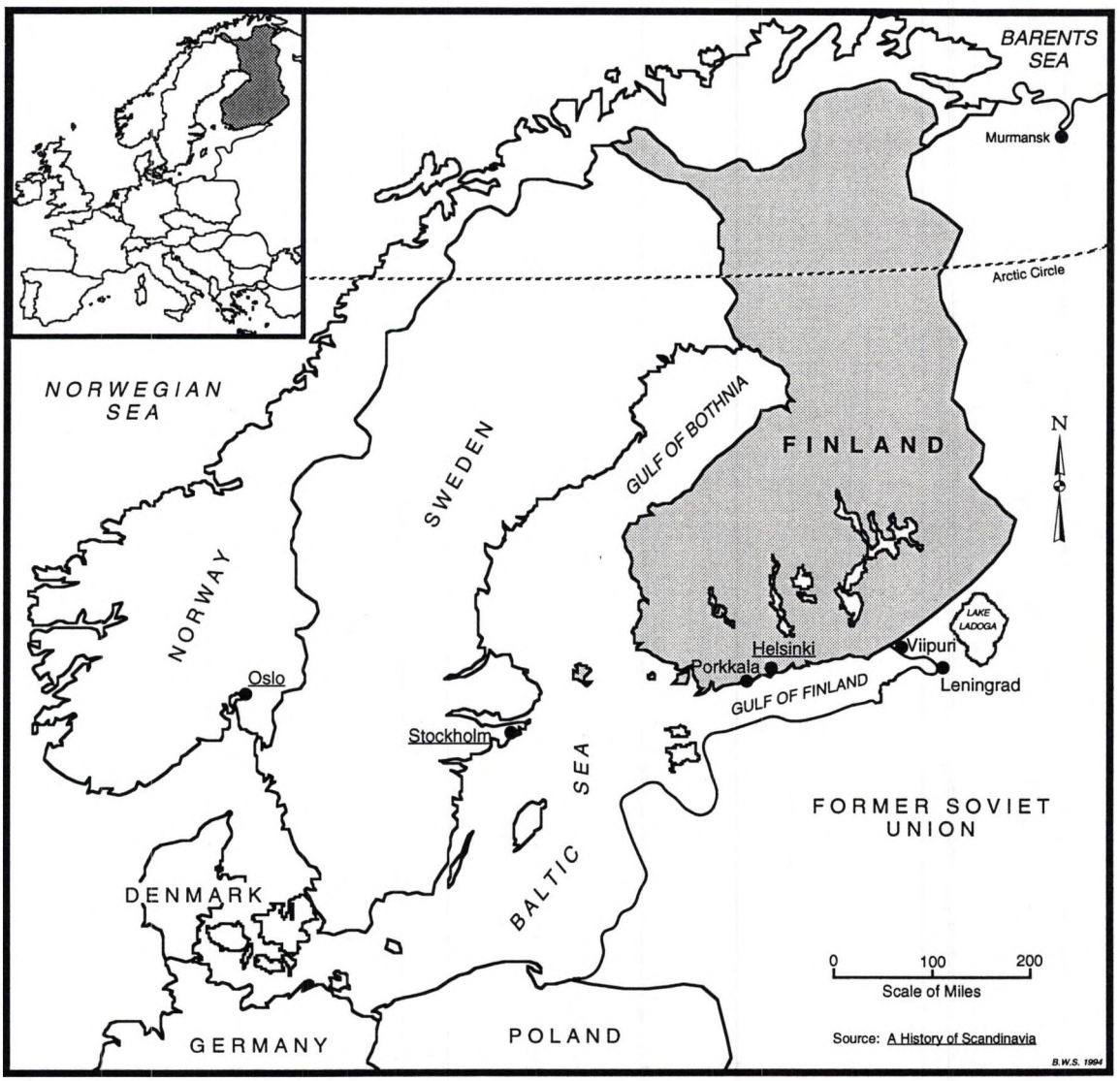
[3] Charles Lundin, *Finland in the Second World War* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1957) provides a good description of Finland's two wars with the Soviet Union and its one war with Germany between 1939 and 1945 and offers a helpful analysis and critique of earlier works on the subject in Finnish, English, and German.

[4] See Max Jakobson, *Finnish Neutrality (New York: Praeger, 1969)* for an insightful perspective on Finnish foreign policy since Finland's independence from the viewpoint of a prominent Finnish diplomat who represented Finland in the United Nations.




Map 1. Modern Finland

enjoyed an enviable reputation in the press of both countries as individuals and as a people. The West's image of Finland and its policy towards Finland during World War II and the Cold War has been thought to be an exception to the framework of power politics and diplomacy. This study will seek to determine the validity of this assertion by examining the portrayal of Finland in the popular press of Great Britain and the United States. This study will also pursue what differences, if any, existed between the Anglo and American press regarding Finland. Building on Michael Berry's *American Foreign Policy and the Finnish Exception* (1987), which examined the American press from 1939-1944, this study will consider whether his selections from the American press were representative of American opinion and how accurate Berry's conclusions were. It seeks to provide a better understanding of Finland during this period and identify those factors that influenced the views of Finland portrayed in the press, thereby determining whether or not Finland was indeed a special case, as Berry contends.

Two separate paradigms, Berry argues, described the United States' view of Finland and they became mutually reinforcing. The first was that of "Honest Little Finland," arising from the fact that Finland continued throughout the 1930s to punctually meet its small debt payments to the United States for a loan it had received following World War I while the rest of Europe had long ago defaulted on their war debts. The other image was of "Valiant Little Finland" defending Western civilization against its archenemy, which arose during the Winter War with the Soviet Union. Berry believes the "Honest" image to be in line with the positive thrust of American foreign policy as Finland epitomized the United States' ideal for peacetime free trade relationships. The "Valiant" image has a somewhat negative connotation as the western community was tentatively defined by

the presence of a shared enemy.[5] This study will discuss to what extent these images continued to be portrayed throughout the Anglo-American press, if at all, and to what degree these images evolved between 1939 and 1955.

Periodicals researched to obtain the portrayal of Finland in the Anglo press were: the *Times* (London), the critical and conservative *Economist*, the laborite *Manchester Guardian Weekly*, and the leftist *New Statesmen and Nation.* Periodicals researched to obtain an accurate portrayal of Finland in the American press were the two most widely read weekly news magazines *Time* and *Newsweek*, the nations's preeminent daily the *New York Times*, the regionally influential *Minneapolis Morning Tribune*, the left leaning *Nation* and *New Republic*, and *Foreign Affairs Quarterly.*

Special attention is given to the coverage of particular events: the Winter War and Finland's entry, participation, and exit from the Continuation War as an ally of Germany. Postwar events discussed are reconstruction, the 1948 Crisis, reparation repayment, and the Soviet withdrawal from Porkkala. This study, however, is not a day by day chronicle of the news but an attempt to understand the judgments, opinions, and analysis of the Anglo-American press regarding Finland and their impressions as to what the appropriate responses of Great Britain and the United States should be toward Finland. To what degree did the press reflect a split personality? That is, to what extent was there disagreement between the "hearts" and the "minds" of the press? Was coverage of Finland colored by idealism or did it represent *realpolitik*? How does the view of Finland change in the Anglo-American press as the Soviet Union goes from being a *de facto* ally of Germany in the early days of World War II, to an essential partner in the alliance that defeated Nazi Germany, to the West's Cold War

5 R. Michael Berry, *American Foreign Policy and the Finnish Exception* (Helsinki: Suomen Historiallinen Seura, 1987), pp. 22-35.

adversary? How accurate were their observations and assessments? Within that context can Finland be considered a special case?

This thesis will divide Finland's history between 1939 and 1955 into four time periods as they relate to different periods of portrayal in the Anglo-American press: 1.) the Winter War; 2.) the peace interlude and the Continuation War; 3.) the first phase of reconstruction between 1944 and 1948; and 4.) Finland's successful survival and the establishment and acceptance of its neutrality. If one understands Finland's unique circumstances, then its resulting history, though nonetheless dramatic, is not as surprising as might at first be thought. The portrayal of Finland in the West was determined to a great extent by the state of relations between the United States and Great Britain on one hand, and the Soviet Union on the other. An attitude of sympathy, respect and admiration for the Finns, however, was often present. The United States and Great Britain, though on the same side during the Second World War and the Cold War, did not share identical views regarding Finland. The British had a significant economic interest in its relations with Finland in the postwar era. The United States, although very sympathetic to the plight of the Finnish people, readily accepted their location as outside its sphere of influence and left the Finns to face their fate in the postwar era as they had during the Winter War, alone.

## II. THE WINTER WAR

*The Northern summer light is amazingly*
*beautiful and divine in its serenity-*
*but the long winter night demands*
*a price for it.* Matti Klingi[1]

The Nordic nations are often referred to as lands of the midnight sun. In the summer that is a true characterization, however, the geographic location that is responsible for the long summer nights also is responsible for a seasonal counterpart, winter days in which it is dark at midday. As autumn and winter approached in the fateful year of 1939, Europe was teetering on the edge of catastrophe. Finland, alone among the European democracies, was initially relieved by news of the pact between Hitler and Stalin. Understandably concerned about a conflict between the two diametrically opposed systems of Communism and Nazism, the Finns thought that the non-aggression pact between Germany and the Soviet Union would mean peace for Finland and the other Northern nations. The pact signed August 23, 1939 in Moscow, however, set the stage for the invasion of Poland and the commencement of World War II and Finland was about to endure a seemingly endless winter night that was to last until the spring of 1945.

The Winter War lasted three and one half months, from November 30, 1939 to mid-March 1940. The Soviets invaded after the Finns had refused to grant them all the territorial concessions they wanted. After they had made their pact with Hitler, the Soviets quickly concluded one-sided agreements with the Baltic nations . The Finns were more stubborn, even

[1] Matti Klingi, *Let Us Be Finns - Essays on History*, (Helsinki: Otava, 1990), 57.

though the Soviets offered to compensate them with land in northern Karelia. The Soviets argued that they needed Finnish territory to assure the safety of Leningrad and their positions in the Baltics. The Finns insisted that they posed no threat to the Soviet Union. Stalin agreed, but said that he was concerned about another power attacking the Soviet Union via Finnish territory. Stalin grew impatient and ordered an invasion that he had anticipated would be a short and sweet victory. He was proven wrong before the entire world. The Soviets, imitating Nazi methods, manufactured a border incident and then asserted that they had been attacked by Finland. A puppet government was installed in the small Finnish border town of Terijoki, headed by Otto Kuusinen, an exiled Finnish communist in Moscow who was a close adviser to Stalin.

The Winter War was big news, and while it lasted it was widely covered. Several common themes appeared in the Anglo-American press. Foremost was an almost universal sympathy and admiration for the Finns. The desperate struggle in the North was in striking contrast to the "Sitzkrieg" in Europe.[2] Great Britain and the United States viewed the heroic Finns romantically. The British press presented the imagery of gallant "white knights" on skis and in addition the American press thought the Finns similar to Indians, both being of noble spirit and in harmony with nature. Two concurrent themes appeared regarding the Soviet Union vis-a-vis Finland: first, both stressed the bumbling incompetence of the Red army against the gallant Finns; the second theme, paradoxically, was the ominous specter of the mighty Moscow menace. The right and the left leaning press in

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2 Many news agencies and periodicals transferred their top correspondents from the Western front in France to Finland, so that they could be where "the action was." Austin Goodrich, *Study in Sisu*, (New York: Ballantine, 1960), 56, commented that a high proportion of the press reports were inspired, written, edited and filed far behind the front lines "from the smoke filled cognac inundated bar of Helsinki's renowned Kamp Hotel."

both Great Britain and the United States had surprisingly similar views regarding aid and outright intervention, but with significantly different motivations. Though no one supported the invasion of Finland, the left did not want to hinder the development of socialism in the Soviet Union, the right in America wished to keep America isolationist, while the right and moderate press in Great Britain wanted to take care of first things first, that is fight Germany singly, not in tandem with the Soviet Union, despite the justice of the Finnish cause.

## Press Reactions to the War's Onset

While negotiations were being conducted in Moscow by Vainno Tanner, leader of the Social Democratic party, and Juho Paasikivi, a leading conservative who has been described as Finland's Churchill,[3] to reach a peaceful solution, the press speculated on a Communist invasion.[4] Both the Anglo and the American press predicted that in the event of a war, Finland would not receive any substantial material assistance. The*Nation* commented in November that the Finns realized if they were attacked, they would only receive moral support. The *Economist* stated that no one was willing or able to help Finland and considered it threatened *in vacuo*. Although Finland was deemed to be one of the most democratic communities the world had seen, and brought to mind the image of an Olympic runner or an honorable debtor, the *Economist* believed the Soviet Union required a base in Finland if it sought to protect its newly acquired Baltic bases.[5]

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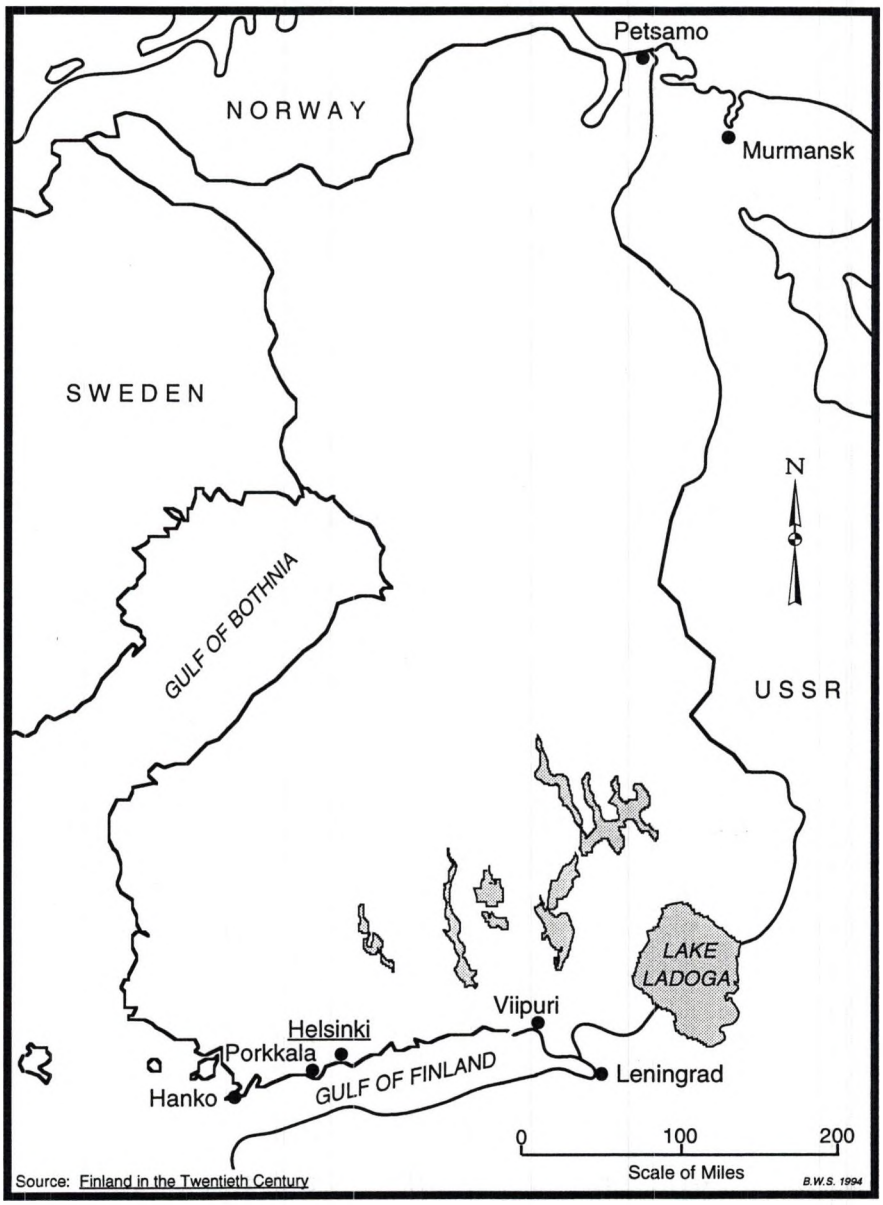
3 Fred Singleton, *A Short History of Finland*, (Cambridge, University Press, 1989), 101.

4 Vaino Tanner, *The Winter War* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1957), provides a first hand account of the political and diplomatic activities of the Finnish government immediately prior to and during the Winter War until the surrender.

5 "Communist Imperialism," *Nation*, 11 November 1939, 511, "Finland and Russia," *Economist*, 11 November 1939, 198-99. "Russia breaks with Finland," *Manchester Guardian Weekly*, 1 December 1939, noted that in event of war that "certainly the Western Powers would not intervene," as did other periodicals.




Map 2. Finland in 1939

After the Soviet invasion had begun, the *Times* (London), thoroughly reflecting the bygone Victorian morality of the Nineteenth Century, criticized the lack of Soviet sportsmanship, "hardly ever has a country been attacked with such a brutal lack of consideration of the customary rules." The odds against the "gallant" Finns were tremendous. The conflict, completely manufactured by the Soviet Union, was either a blatant act of territorial aggrandizement or implied a deep Soviet mistrust of the Nazis. In either case, the Soviet propaganda created a "hysterical picture" of Goliath trembling before David. The *New Statesmen and Nation* agreed with that analysis and lamented, "We live in a jungle: there is nothing we can do about Finland."[6]

The *Manchester Guardian Weekly* thought the brutal war waged upon the unprovocative, small and honest Finland by the Soviet Union was "naked expediency, regardless of all right and wrong." Noting that Finland was a favorite of the United States, the *Economist* hoped the invasion of Finland would cause the United States to change its neutrality status. The *Economist* clearly sympathized with the Finns, declaring,

> In the magnitude of the odds they face, in their total innocence of any provocation, in the inherent superiority of their civilization over the tyranny they resist, the gallantry of the Finns exceeds anything in living memory and long before.[7]

A distinct discrepancy existed, however, between "heart" and "mind," as it would not be prudent for the Allies to help the Finns who must, however regrettably, fight alone. As the *New Statesmen* warned, "[o]n grounds of

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[6] *Times*(London) 1 December 1939, "Russia's Patience," *The New Statesmen and Nation* , 2 December 1939. Henceforth the latter periodical will be referred to simply as *New Statesmen* in the text and the *Times*(London) will be referred to as the *Times*.

[7] "The War on Finland," *Manchester Guardian Weekly*, 8 December 1939, 442, "Stalin's Aggression," *Economist*, 9 December 1939: 361-62.

prudence alone, those who wish to turn this war into a crusade against Bolshevism are our worst enemies."[8]

The American press' outrage against the Soviet Union exceeded that in Great Britain. The *Minneapolis Morning Tribune* asserted that the gulf between the Russian Communists and the German Nazis had long since been closed. The United States, however, could do little besides notifying the Soviets of American disapproval, argued the *Tribune*, and Americans should not trust their emotions to guide them in international policy. The *Tribune* warned of a serious danger: that America's "natural sympathy for Finland will precipitate some rash and impetuous act." Its editors feared that President Roosevelt was taking steps regarding Finland that jeopardized the United States' neutrality status.[9]

*The New Republic* stated that there had never been a clearer case of unprovoked calculated aggression. Finland was a well-governed, intelligent nation admired by the world for its sturdy and progressive culture. The *New Republic* 's cover page declared that Stalin had chosen the right course if he had wanted to unite the democratic and fascist capitalist powers against him. It alleged that many forces in Germany, Japan, France, Italy, the Vatican, the United States and Great Britain would love to see a crusade against Bolshevism. "American conservatives bear a hatred to the Soviet Union they never entertained toward Hitler and Germany." The United States' anger towards Russia and sympathy for Finland was real, but it would be a mistake to become involved in a world war.[10]

The left in both the United States and Great Britain was painfully disenchanted by Stalin's brutal power play. Freda Kirchwey, writer for the

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8 "The Man of Steel," *The New Statesmen and Nation*, 9 December 1939, 811-812.
9 *Minneapolis Morning Tribune*, December 1939.
10 "Stalin Spreads the War," *The New Republic*, 13 December 1939, 101:218-220.

*Nation*, was a typical example. She criticized the Soviet's tactics, believing that they could have gotten their demands without war.[11] Letters to the *New Statesmen* reflected a similar opinion in Great Britain. One letter writer called upon all responsible individuals and groups on the left to condemn the Soviet invasion of Finland without exception, or else the cause of Socialism in Great Britain would be irreparably damaged. Another letter noted that 1940 was to have seen not only the final payments of Finland's debt to the United States but the coming into operation of old-age and disability pensions. The frugal, honest, fearless, and hard working Finn, nevertheless, could be expected to endure their tribulation. A third writer asserted that the Russians "lacked essential Christian qualities" and thought the Russians probably lacked other less essential qualities as well. Such comments were not, however, left unanswered. One British defender of Stalin, judging the invasion depended on whether one wanted capitalism or Socialism to rule the world, wrote, "and I want Socialism." Another letter writer admitted that the invasion of Finland was morally indefensible and bitterly regretted, even by someone who considered himself a warm friend of the Soviet Union. He criticized the capitalist press, however, for being particularly anti-Soviet not pro-Finnish, correctly pointing out that the fate of Abyssinia, Czechoslovakia, Spain, or China all failed to receive the same unanimity of support.[12] In observations such as this, one can see the genesis of the questions as to whether or not there was something inherently "special" about Finland.

At the outbreak of the Winter War the portrayal of Finland in the Anglo-American press was remarkably similar. Both the Anglo and the

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11 Freda Kirchwey, "By Fire and Sword," *Nation* 9 December 1939, 149:639-40. She quoted the *Volkischer Beobacter* that gave the Nazi analysis of the Russo-Finnish War as "showing that collective security is ineffective in protecting the strong from the weak." See Ralph Bates, "Disasters in Finland," *The New Republic*, 13 December 1939, 221-225, as another example of a self-desribed radical who had become disenchanted with the Soviet Union.

12 "Correspondence," *The New Statesmen and Nation*, December 1-31,1939.

American press believed that America had a unique appreciation for Finland, a special relationship evolving out of debt repayment and democratic government. The image of "Honest Finland" was emphasized at the onset and evoked sympathy for this small nation.[13] As the war passed through its opening stages, the image of "Valiant Finland" quickly developed to become the more dominant image evoking admiration in the Anglo-American press. Despite the almost universal sympathy for Finland, the press in neither America nor Great Britain anticipated assistance from the West for Finland. The left leaning segments of the press in both countries and America's isolationist press, furthermore, sought to prevent action that might lead to war with the Soviet Union.

## Military Impressions and Analysis

Without question, the most prominent military personality was Finland's top military commander Marshall Carl Gustav Mannerheim. Before Finland's independence Mannerheim had been a Tsarist officer, fighting in the Russo-Japanese War and in World War I as a general. When the Russian Revolution occurred, he returned to Finland where he assumed command of the White forces and led them to victory in the Finnish Civil War.[14] The defensive fortifications that stretched between the countless lakes and narrow passageways along Finland's Karelian isthmus became known as the Mannerheim line, and as long as it held, Finland was safe. The battle lines between Leningrad, and Finland's second city, Viipuri, were

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[13] During and after World War I the United States loaned $10 billion to European countries. With the exception of Finland, all the European countries defaulted on their debts and the financial burden fell upon the American taxpayer. See Wayne S. Cole, *Roosevelt and the Isolationists, 1932-45,* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1983), 81.

[14] For further insights on Mannerheim and his eventful career, see Carl Gustav Mannerheim, *The Memoirs of Marshall Mannerheim,* translated by Eric Lewenhaupt (New York: Dutton, 1954), Stig Jagerskiold, *Mannerheim, Marshall of Finland,* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1986), and J.E.O, Screen, *Mannerheim, the Years of Preparation,* (London: Hurst, 1970).

recognized as the front that would determine the outcome of the war. As news of lop-sided Finnish victories reached the world, the Finns were praised for their efficiency along with a corresponding tendency to describe the Soviets as bumbling incompetents.

The international community readily offered its moral and political support to Finland. The Finnish delegate to the League of Nations argued that was not enough, declaring that Finland needed,

> more than tears and sympathy - she has shed enough tears of her own. . . We are fighting a battle for civilization and for the defense of the rights of man. We ask for the help of all men of goodwill. We can not defend the Finnish people against the bullets, shells and gas of our aggressors by mere international resolutions. If you help us all men will bless you as defenders of civilization.[15]

In the same issue of the *Manchester Guardian Weekly* that printed this appeal was an article headlined "Finland's Cause: Independence, Liberty and Honor." If the British government did not act to help Finland, it would not be due to the lack of press support.[16]

The French were much more willing to go to Finland's aid than the British. Edouard Daladier, France's Prime Minister, had praised Finland as a noble country that was a crime victim. The greatness of a nation, he asserted, was not determined by the size of its territory but by "the valor of its sons and the degree of its civilization." As the Allies pursed the possibility of sending troops to aid Finland, the French government became increasingly frustrated by Sweden whose neutralism was attacked as reaching the depths of moral and material passivity. The *Nation* observed that the condemnations of the Soviet Union were in proportion to the denunciators distance from the Russian border. Hence, the South American nations were most vocal, while

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15 "Finland and Russia," *Manchester Guardian Weekly*,15 December 1939.
16 "Finland and Russia," *Manchester Guardian Weekly*,15 December 1939.

the European neutral nations were uneasily quiet, hoping to avoid a fate similar to Finland or Poland.[17]

As the Finnish war dragged on, France and Great Britain became more and more upset by the dogged neutralism of Sweden and Norway. The Allies began to make preparations for an expeditionary force to be sent to Finland. Norway and Sweden, however, refused transit permission to the Allies. Sweden was the source of valuable iron ore for the Germans, and neither Sweden nor Norway wished to become a battle ground for four great powers: the Soviet Union, Germany, Great Britain and France. The Allies told Finland they would send relief forces if Finland made a formal request for soldiers. The Finns were painfully aware of the positions of the Norwegian and Swedish governments and realized the Allies were more interested in securing the Swedish iron ore deposits from Germany than in driving the Soviet army from Finland. Consequently, the Finns never made that formal request. If they had, one can only speculate on what the ramifications for the outcome of World War II would have been.

The Mannerheim line was, thought the *Times*, typical of the liberty loving Finns as in the past summer there was a spontaneous volunteer movement to construct the fortifications. The Finns were acknowledged to be well trained in tactics and athletics, primarily skiing. Finnish soldiers were likened at night to "white bats on skis." Noting the strong Finnish resistance, the *Manchester Guardian Weekly* thought that all available evidence confirmed the "first impressions of the Finns' efficiency and the Russians inefficiency."[18]

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17 "France and Russia." *Manchester Guardian Weekly*, 15 January 1939, 471 and "French Criticism of Sweden," 26 January 1940, 66, "The Finns at Geneva," *Nation*, 16 December 1939, 667-68.

18 *Times* (London), December 1-31, 1939, *Manchester Guardian Weekly*, December 1-29, 1939.

By January, 1940, the press was speculating on the possibility of an actual Finnish victory. Some thought that if Finland received aid in time she could hold out, others thought a Russian victory was inevitable; all agreed, however, that without aid the Finns would lose. In February the Soviet pressure was showing signs of breaking through. Some of the early stereotypes of Russian incompetence, nonetheless, still remained. As the effectiveness of Soviet bombing increased, some reports speculated that the improved accuracy of Soviet bombing attacks was due to the planes being flown by German pilots.[19]

The amazing Finnish victories, however, were recognized as mere breathing spells. Finland's hope, the *Times* observed, remained aid from abroad. The resources of human nerves were not unlimited, and the Finns were becoming strained. The Soviets were using fresh troops every day while the Finns were never relieved. What appeared impossible had come to pass, the Russians had suffered a definite reverse. The Finnish soldier had a high standard of training and valor and the natural defensive advantages of Finland would not have resulted in these victories without the men trained to take advantage of them. The Finnish tactics were thought brilliant: on the the Karelian Isthmus a rigid defense, elsewhere open warfare. The *Manchester Guardian Weekly*, had some praise for the Russian soldiers who were stubborn fighters but had the misfortune that their rulers, the Tsars and the Bolsheviks, sent them to fight with poor materials. The *Guardian* pleaded for help to be sent to Finland while their was still time.[20]

Throughout the Winter War the Anglo press cheered on the Finns in their early victories. Significant attention was given to the prospects of Allied intervention and the opinions of other European governments on the

19 "Russia's Onslaught," *Manchester Guardian Weekly*, 9 February 1940, 101.
20 *Times*(London), December 1-31, 1939, *Manchester Guardian Weekly*, December 1-31, 1939.

invasion of Finland were frequently reported. As the war progressed, the Anglo press quickly and repeatedly commented that time was against the Finns. The inability of the British government to decisively assist Finland lead to frustration in the moderate and conservative elements of the Anglo press.

The American press, as did the American people, reveled in the Finns successful defense of their country. The impression soon arose that Finns were not just successful because of superior tactics, but that they were successful because of superior character, intelligence, and capability. The war was described in the *Minneapolis Morning Tribune* as pitting Finland, a little nation of educated people in a self reliant democracy, against the illiterate hordes of the Soviet Union. A *Tribune* editorial mocked Soviet press reports that criticized the Finns for not fighting fairly as Finnish ski soldiers were camouflaged in white and attacked and withdrew quickly without waiting for a Soviet volley. The Finns were deemed to be putting up a beautiful defense that had the world's sympathy. The *Tribune* welcomed the Finns to fight anyway they pleased, and wished them well.[21]

*Time* and *Newsweek* discussed Finland every week during the war, and compared the Finns to American Indians resisting the expansion of the White man on the frontier. S. Fuqua, *Newsweek*'s military editor, equated the Finnish ski cavalry assault tactics with the old Indian battle principle of scattering to march and assembling to fight. The Finnish attacks bore a striking similarity to the encircling maneuvers utilized by the Indians. These tactics, which required audacity, courage, and a touch of military genius to be successful, called for a deep drive by an advance guard to rush around the

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21 Frederick Palmer, "Myth of Soviet's Military Might Jeopardized by the Finns," *Minneapolis Morning Tribune*, 7 December 1939, 14 "Unfair to Reds," *Minneapolis Morning Tribune*, 15 December 1939, 14.

enemy and encircle him, taking any cover available. Both the Finns and the Indians, noted Fuqua, were renown for their scouting ability. *Time* stated that if the Mannerheim line was broken the Finns would be forced to "retire to their forests and fight for life like the Indians of North America."[22] The ominous conclusion of either the *Time* or *Newsweek* analogy was that just as the North American Indians had been doomed to failure, so too were the Finns. Despite their skill and heroism the Indians could not offset the superior numbers and strength of their enemy, and the Finns could not continue to hold out against the weight of the Red army. In the case of Finland, all of America, hoping for a miraculous victory that one might expect from a Hollywood movie, was cheering for the "Indians."

Hannibal and Napoleon, observed *Newsweek*, with the best armies and generals of their times, were defeated in winter campaigns. Though the Soviets lacked such distinguished generalship, they had, nonetheless, managed (with Finnish help) to equal the disastrous results of Napoleon's and Hannibal's winter defeats. Journalists reported seeing the remains of a destroyed Soviet column stretching for four miles. New Soviet tactics of threatening the Finns on the front lines were mocked. Russian loudspeakers supposedly broadcast to the Finns on the Karelian front that if they did not surrender soon, they would have to fight the Germans.[23] Such stories stressed the Red Army's inability to conduct an effective military campaign and its lack of confidence.

The American press continued to shower the Finnish soldier with praise. His battle performance, it was said, had "hardly been excelled in history, if it indeed has been equaled." It was supposedly impossible to find

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22 S. Fuqua, "Indian Fighting on the Finnish Front," *Newsweek*, 15 January 1940, 22, "Northern Theater," *Time* 11 December 1940, 23-25.

23 "The Flying Finns," *Newsweek* 15 January 1940, 15;19-20, "Olga from the Volga," *Newsweek* 22 January 1940, 15:22-23.

soldiers with better physiques anywhere in the world than these good athletes and marksmen who were virtually born on skis. Aside from their native intelligence, they were products of an excellent education system. These youthful looking soldiers loved to laugh. The great Finnish victory at Soumussalmi, in which two Red army divisions were destroyed, was held as a classic example of individual initiative: the Finnish division commander had issued only two written orders during the battle. The Finnish ski patrols of ten were said to attack up to 200 Russians, using knives for stealth and rifles only as a last resort.[24]

After the Winter War was over, the *New Republic* commented that the press in general had overplayed the weakness of the Soviet army. They were capable of defending Russia and they fought the war with their own weapons. While the world may not have held the Soviet weaponry in high regard, the Russians had been dependent upon the West for arms during World War I. This reflected a level of industrial achievement by the Soviets that had never been reached by the Tsars. Another disaster resembling the Finnish war, though, could possibly lead to the end of Stalin's government.[25]

The American press hoped for a Finnish victory and heaped extensive praise upon the Finnish soldiers and people. The dashing hit and run tactics of the mobile Finnish ski-troops were admired. The press, however, also reflected the reluctance of American neutralists and leftist to offer anything more than political and moral support.

During the course of the Winter War, the Anglo-American press went through a similar evolution of opinion concerning the military situation. At

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[24] Harold Denny, "The Men Who Fight for Finland," *New York Times Magazine*, 18 February 1940, 3,22. "Northern Theater," *Time* 5 February 1940, 31 provides an example of Finnish humor during the Winter War: A Russian soldier knocks at heaven's gate and St. Peter opens the gate and asks, "So you're dead now?" "Oh, no," says the Russian, "according to the official communique, I'm still advancing on the Karelian Isthmus."

[25] "How Strong is the Red Army," *New Republic*, 1 April 1940, 102:421.

first it was thought that Finland would be quickly taken over, then as the Finns succeeding in holding off the initial Soviet attacks, the press began to debate whether or not Finland might win. If it was possible that Finland could win, then the issue of how much to help Finland was raised. Despite sincere sympathy for the Finns, the press did not deem attempting to help Finland to be worth the cost. But the plight of the four million Finns, nevertheless, was prominently discussed, much more than Poland, Czechoslovakia, or the Baltics. The British wanted to focus on Nazi Germany and the United States wanted to stay out of any conflict, but in the justifications of their policies, both countries were defensive, as if they felt guilty over their actions.

## Public Opinion

Both Great Britain and the United States witnessed a ground swell of public support for the "gallant" Finns who were making, the *Times* asserted, a stand against joint aggressors, Germany and the Soviet Union. The Sunday service at Westminster Abbey on December 17, 1939 featured special intercessions on behalf of Finland to the Almighty. Letters to the editors in both the United States and Great Britain reflected both an emotional and intelligent discourse on how to react to the plight of heroic Finland. The *Times* set the tone proclaiming that if Finland were saved, more than Finnish liberty would be preserved. "Her salvation would be a triumph for liberty which would re-echo throughout the World." Letters to the *Times* stressed the heroism of Finland, one stated that Finland's fight for freedom was showing the world that heroism could defeat masses and machinery. Another reader predicted that if the Scandinavian nations did not ban

together they would be taken over by the Soviet Union one by one.[26] Winston Churchill, while still First Lord of the Admiralty, stated in one of his memorable radio broadcasts:

> Only Finland, superb - nay sublime - in the jaws of peril, shows what free men can do. The service rendered by Finland to mankind is magnificent . . . If the light of freedom which is still burning so brightly in the frozen North should be finally quenched it might herald a return to the Dark Ages.[27]

The British, however, were not about to become involved; they had their hands full already and they did not want to be taking on both the Germans and the Soviets. Neville Chamberlain, the British Prime Minister, had declared prior to Churchill's broadcast, that the primary objective of the allied war effort was "the defeat of Nazi Germany, we must never lose sight of that fact."[28] A reader of the *Manchester Guardian Weekly* clearly disagreed, arguing that as the policeman of Europe, Great Britain ought to help Finland. "It makes no sense to fight only one gunman."[29]

With Christmas and the New Year arriving, several articles appeared discussing the Soviet bombing of Finnish civilians, as well as human interest stories about families separated by the war and the plight of children. *The New Statesmen* observed that Christmas time had also brought the rhetoric of a conflict between "Christian civilization" and totalitarianism. It warned against such tendencies, declaring that, "[t]o plunge the world into a new war of religions would be to destroy Christian civilization, not to save it." Stalin had abandoned the moral appeal of the Soviet Union and, commented the

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26 "Prayers at Abbey for Finland," *Times* (London)16 December 1939, "A Valiant Defense"*Times* (London) 28 December 1939.

27 "Churchill's Speech," *Times*(London) 22 December 1939.

28 "The War in Finland: Danger of Nazi-Soviet Coalition" *Manchester Guardian Weekly* ,22 December 1939, 487, "Britain and Finland," *Manchester Guardian Weekly*, 22 December 1939, 491.

29 "Help for Finland," *Manchester Guardian Weekly*, 12 January 1940, 33.

*New Statesmen*, he had made a common Marxist mistake when he invaded Finland, he had underrated nationalism.[30] This analysis may indeed have had some merit as Stalin apparently believed that the workers of Finland would rise up and support the puppet government of Otto Kuusinen. The Finnish Communists, however, supported Finland and fought the Soviet Union side by side with their fellow countrymen of all political persuasions. Arvo Tuominen, Secretary General of the Finnish Communist Party, did not join the Terijoki government and ordered the tens of thousands of Finns that he held sway over in the party and in the trade unions to fight for Finland.[31]

The Anglo press revealed a split in British public opinion concerning the right course of action concerning Finland and the war with Germany. If morality were an issue, it was clearly on the side of Finland, but as Disraeli had said in the nineteenth century, politics is the art of the possible. A tug of war occurred between heart and mind, causing an uneasiness over Finland and reducing the confidence in Chamberlain's leadership even further.

With the exception of the far left, the hearts of America clearly supported the Finns. Surprisingly, a letter hostile to Finland found its way on the opinion page of the *Minneapolis Morning Tribune*. Lauri Jarvinen, a Finn who had immigrated to the United States because he did not like the Finnish government, alleged that Marshall Mannerheim and the rich landlords feared the poor, who were not adequately represented in Finland, and sought to keep them oppressed. Jarvinen quickly spurred a reply from another reader who classified Jarvinen's letter as Red propaganda. A third reader, much more typical, admired the spartan heroism of the noble and brave Finns who were rightly accorded the same honor as the heroes of

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30 "The Frozen War," *The New Statesmen and Nation*, 30 December 1939, 945-946.

31 Arvo Tuominen, *The Bells of the Kremlin: An Experience in Communism*, (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1983), 319-320.

Thermopalae, "but," he added ominously, "those heroes were all slain." Commenting on the futility of Finland's resistance he concluded that the Soviets would conquer by sheer weight of numbers. Another reader, undoubtedly representing the Scandinavian influence in the upper Midwest described the Finns, along with the other Scandinavian peoples as being, "among the most friendly, kindly, intelligent and honorable of the races inhabiting the earth."[32] Similar characterizations of the Russians, Slavic Communists, were not to be seen.

While the Allies were trying to decide what to do for Finland, press coverage continued to evoke sympathy for Finland and anger towards the Soviet Union. The attack on Finland was compared to the image of a rape. Finland's geographical representation on a map was observed to suggest the figure of a full skirted woman - perhaps maimed by a beast, who held aloft the stumps of her arms in supplication for deliverance from her savage foe. The *Minneapolis Morning Tribune* argued further that the Soviet invasion of Finland was an indefensible act of aggression, even if George Bernard Shaw had defended the invasion because of Soviet security concerns. Referring to both their debt payment record and their resistance, the *Tribune* editorialized that the heroic Finns had put greater nations to shame.[33]

Since Finland was showing itself to be such an exceptional country, the press needed an exceptional word to describe it, and the Finnish language just happened to contain such a word, *sisu*. Hudson Strode wrote a feature story on sisu in the *New York Times Magazine*. He observed that more attention had been paid to Finland in the last three months than in the previous nineteen centuries, and he was not far from the truth. Sisu is an uniquely Finnish word that has no precise equivalent in any other language and eludes

[32] *Minneapolis Morning Tribune*, December 1-31, 1939.
[33] *Minneapolis Morning Tribune*, December 1-31, 1939.

definition. If one could understand sisu, one could grasp how the Finns had so gallantly withstood the Soviet onslaught. Paavo Nurmi, the world champion runner defined sisu as "patience and strong will without passion." Sisu connotates tenacity, endurance, guts, and unwavering determination. The Finns, thought Strode, had a fresh, primitive side that was unspoiled and in close harmony with nature. The Finns were described as being without selfishness, pettiness, or meanness despite their spartan qualities. Strode stated that the Finns believe that "pity never harmed a man except when he pities himself." The real religion of the Finns was patriotism and a passion for self improvement, hence they did not fear death or destruction, as Spirit was life's only significant reality.[34]

As public support for assistance appeared to grow in early 1940, the press took a harder look at Finland. The *New Statesmen* asked if Finland was a democracy. There was a long standing charge of pro-German sentiment in the Finnish military, particularly among the officer corps.[35] All over the world, commented the *New Republic*, army officers develop a psychology closely akin to fascism.[36] The West could remain assured, however, that the Finns feared and hated both the Germans and the Russians. Finland was an orderly democracy, albeit not as exalted as some supporters of Finland

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34 Hudson Strode, "Sisu: A Word that Explains Finland," *New York Times Magazine* , 14 January 1940, 6-7. For a deeper examination of the spiritual aspects of the Finnish character see Matti Klingi, "Aspects of the Nordic Self" in Matti Klingi *Let Us Be Finns - Essays on History*.

35 This dated back to the *Jager* movement when 2,000 Finns went to Germany in 1915 to receive military training. Motivated by a nationalistic desire for independence, they were essential to the White's victory in the Finnish Civil War and were predisposed to view Russia as Finland's principal enemy.

36 The Lapua Movement in Finland from 1929 through 1932 was a vocal and visible right-wing movement. Encouraged by the rural clergy and some banking interests, the Lapua movement sought and obtained the exclusion of the communist party from political activity. They were suppressed after they attempted to have the Social Democratic party banned as well. The Lapua Movement reappered under the banner of the People's Patriotic Movement (IKL) but never obtained more than 14 seats out of the 200 in the Finnish Parlilament. See Fred Singleton, *A Short History of Finland*, 121-123 and John Wuorinen, *A History of Finland*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1965), 241-242, 251-252.

claimed, with significant progressive legislation.[37] The left which had looked to the Soviet Union for the model of a perfect society, actually saw much that it approved of in Finland's society.

The British press disapproved of America's neutrality policy. The *Economist* in particular had an ax to grind, criticizing America for not offering military aid to "Valiant Finland." It asserted that America's foreign policy was dictated by fear of war, making references to "America's Munich." The *New Statesmen* criticized America's policy for doing too much, judging it to be based on dislike and fear of Russia in addition to a special sympathy for Finland. President Roosevelt had declared a "moral embargo" on arm sales to the Soviet Union two days after it had invaded Finland but had waited a whole year to apply such an embargo after Japan had invaded China. Propagandist of the "Moscow menace" were not considered warmongers. Disapproval over America's neutrality policy was also expressed in the United States. The *New Republic* worried that the feeling in America for Finland was being exploited to condition Americans to view Moscow as their enemy. The isolationist press in America was also uncomfortable with the "moral embargo." The *Minneapolis Morning Tribune,* commented that although the moral embargo was easily understandable, it was a violation of America's neutrality, both laws and principle.[38]

The press in both countries began to emphasize that time was against Finland. Unless the West were to send help quickly, Finland's defeat was inevitable. A *New York Times* editorial pessimistically spoke of the "fate of a race" stating the fate of the Finns in Karelia was a grim lesson for those Finns who were still desperately fighting. Pressure to give military aid to the Finns

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[37] "Is Finland a Democracy?" *The New Republic,* 29 January 1940, 102: 135-136.

[38] "America's Munich," *Economist* 20 January 1940, 96, Barbara Wertheim, "The United States and Finland," *The New Statesmen and Nation,* 20 January 1940, 68-69, "Neutrality Cross-Currents," *Minneapolis Morning Tribune,* 28 December 1939, 4.

continued in late February and early March 1940 up until the end of the war on March 12.[39] John Dingel, a Representative from Michigan, a state with several Finnish communities criticized an aid bill for Finland that was granting only non-military supplies because of the restrictions of the Neutrality Acts. "We know," he declared, "the Finns need shrapnel, buckshot, barbed wire, and all the fiercest implements of hell because they are fighting to stop anti-Christ and the hosts of hell lead by Beelzebub."[40] Yet supporters of the left also remained vigilant, though a distinct minority. A letter to the *Manchester Guardian Weekly* from the Fabians George Bernard Shaw, Sidney and Beatrice Webb argued against assisting Finland. They stated that the British Empire should not attack the Soviet Union as it was not only wrong but militarily doomed to failure.[41]

In the Anglo-American press the neutrality of the American government and the actions of the British government were subject to much debate and criticism. The implication of the press coverage of public opinion was that the moral response would be to help Finland but that the expedient response was to avoid the military involvement that would be required to save Finland. The Finnish people, nonetheless, continued to be portrayed as a sturdy, stout, and brave lot who had a seemingly endless supply of sisu. Letters to the editor sections of periodicals were overwhelmingly sympathetic with the Finns. Editorials, while condemning the Soviet invasion, frequently urged caution. Though neutral in deed, the Anglo-American press did not want to be considered neutral in thought.

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39 Leland Stow, "Time Against Finland," 17 February 1940, 243-44, "Fate of a Race," *New York Times*, 26 February 1940, 14.

40 "For Finland," *Time*, 11 March 1940, 35:16-17.

41 "Allies and Russia: the Incalculable Risks of a War," *Manchester Guardian Weekly*, 8 March 1940, 198.

## End of the Winter War

As the Winter War concluded, the press spoke of the futility of Finland's resistance, debated whether or not Finland could have been helped, and placed blame on those most responsible for Finland's fate. Universally, the press regretted the harshness of the terms imposed upon Finland, but there was also a sense of relief that the Finland's trial was over. After the "Phony War" came to an end in western Europe in May, 1940, however, little attention was paid to the work of Finnish reconstruction and the resettlement of the Karelian refugees. With the fall of France and the beginning of the Battle of Britain, Finland quickly became an old story. The realities of power politics in the twentieth century came home to roost; great powers did not have time to concern themselves with the fate of one of the many defeated small powers of Europe.

The *Manchester Guardian Weekly* believed that Finland and Great Britain shared, in principle, the same cause. It lamented, "We feel that once again we have not been able to save those whom somehow we should have saved." Difficult times were still ahead for the British people and they saw Finland as one more nation to fall victim to aggression without help. Letters to the *Times* praised the "Spirit of Finland." One reader viewed the defense of Finland as "the most heartening thing in modern history." Another reader believed that Great Britain owed another debt to Finland, for her realistic view of the war situation had prevented her from formally requesting British aid, which would have been disastrous.[42]

The *Minneapolis Tribune* was again representative of the press in its assessment of realpolitik in the twentieth century, "[t]here is little spirit of knight errantry in modern warfare, as plucky Finland, fighting to exhaustion,

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42 "Debate on Finland," *Manchester Guardian Weekly*, 22 March 1940,*Times*(London) March 1 - 31, 1940.

must have realized long ago." Finland had gone down forsaken by her fellow democracies and was destined to be an economic satellite of the Nazi-Soviet Axis. Finland would cease, therefore, to posses real independence for the duration of the war. The Soviets might regret, the *Tribune* predicted, preventing Norway, Sweden and Finland from forming a defensive alliance. If Germany was to attack Scandinavia, the Soviets would have to blame themselves.[43] This was an interesting observation for the Nazis might have had a difficult time taking over Finland, Sweden, and Norway simultaneously. Whether this would have deterred Hitler, however, who went on to invade the Soviet Union and declare war on the United States, is doubtful. The issue as to whether Finland was a German satellite or an independent nation was to be of crucial importance for Finland in the Anglo-American press and its relations with Great Britain and the United States during the Continuation War.

George Soule asked a painful question in the *New Republic*. Who got anything from the war commensurate with their sacrifice? Certainly not the Finns, who earned the admiration of the world for their skills and courage but had been forced to accept worse terms than the Soviets had requested before the war began. Soule thought that if France and Great Britain had intervened four of the worlds most precious cultures would have been destroyed, as Germany would have invaded the North to protect its supply of raw materials from Sweden. The *Nation* condemned the Soviet Union as the aggressor and ridiculed their tactics. The British government was said to bear a high responsibility for Finland's defeat, avoiding conflict with the Soviet Union in a hope to split them from the Nazis. Norway and Sweden,

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[43] *Minneapolis Morning Tribune*, March 1-31, 1940.

however, were held to have the greatest responsibility for Finland's defeat, and, it was held, they may have cause to regret it.[44]

The *New York Times* did bring attention to the rebuilding of postwar Finland, commenting that the problems of reconstruction were almost more difficult than the war and seemingly as hopeless. The Finns had to build housing for 500,000 refugees from the ceded territories, as less than one percent of those living there chose to remain under Soviet rule. The *New York Times* predicted a dynamo of activity in Finland to tackle the problems of peace. The Finns were praised for the one time capital levy that was raised in their country to pay for reconstruction and spare future generations from back-breaking taxation. The *New York Times* expressed a sense of guilt over the blockade of Europe by the British that was affecting the Finns. It editorialized, "[t]he democratic world would have an easier conscience," if somehow Finland could be helped in her present battle against starvation and isolation.[45] Unfortunately, despite the best of intentions, Finland was to remain isolated and alone for a long time to come. Winter had not yet exacted its final price.

## Summation

The Winter War created the image "Valiant Finland" and etched it quite firmly in the Anglo-American press. Finland was considered to be part of a common heritage shared by Western Civilizations. The two most often emphasized characteristics of this civilization were democracy and Christianity. Finland's image was enhanced by the general revulsion in the Anglo-American press towards the Soviet Union. But Finland's popularity

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44 George Soule, "The War Nobody Won," *New Republic*, 25 March 1940, 102:306-307, Robert Dell, "Why Finland Lost," *Nation* , 23 March 1940, 385-87.
45 *New York Times*, March-December 1940.

was not due exclusively to anti-Soviet sentiment. The Finns' rugged individualism on the battlefront appealed to traditional American values, and the British appreciated the Finns' stiff upper-lip. Despite all the sympathy for Finland, no significant help was given, except by Sweden.[46] Though Finland was lauded as an outpost of Western Civilization, *realpolitik* and national interest took precedence over idealism in the responses of both the United States and Great Britain.[47] Churchill had proclaimed that Finland showed "what free men could do," but the few nations that could rightly be considered free decided to do nothing. After Finland's defeat, the press seemed to stress the inevitability of Finland's defeat to excuse the lack of action by the Allies. The futility of Finland's resistance served to enhance the romantic image of "Valiant Finland." The Winter War was to create a substantial reservoir of good will for Finland, but the events of World War II were once again to isolate Finland from the West causing confusion and mixed sympathies among the British, Americans, and Finns, not to mention the Soviet Union and Germany.

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[46] Sweden allowed 8,000 volunteers to take "leave" from the Swedish Army and sent much arms and ammunition, leaving its own stocks uncomfortably low. See Franklin Scott, *Sweden: The Nations History,* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1977), 504.

[47] Not until the middle of 1940 did isolationism lose its majority position in American public opinion. After October 1940, a majority of the American people thought giving aid to Great Britain was more important to the national interest then avoiding war. See Wayne Cole, *Roosevelt and the Isolationists, 1932-45,* 363.

## III. THE CONTINUATION WAR JUNE 1941-SEPTEMBER 1944

*[H]ow we live is so far removed from how we ought to live, that he who abandons what is done for what ought to be done, will rather bring about his own ruin than his preservation.*
Niccolo Machiavelli[1]

On the morning of June 22, 1941 operation Barbarossa began when the Germans launched a massive Blitzkrieg against the Soviet Union. The invasion was a clear turning point, perhaps **the** turning point, in the Second World War. Despite amazing early victories over the Red Army, the Nazi war machine had bitten off more than it could chew. The German invasion of the Soviet Union created significant dilemmas for Finland. When the invasion began, Finland vainly tried to maintain her neutrality, but neither the Soviet Union nor Germany observed it. Finland attempted to maintain its neutrality until June 25, 1941, when, after several attacks by the Soviet Union, Finland officially entered the war. Caught between Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union, Finland struggled to maintain its independence. The state of Great Power relations forced the reluctant Finns to go to war against the Soviet Union again, this time as a *de facto* ally of Nazi Germany.

During the three years and three months until the Soviet-Finnish armistice in September of 1944, Finland entered into a very complicated and perilous diplomatic and political situation on top of her military concerns.

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[1] Niccolo Machiavelli, *The Prince*, trans. Luigi Ricci (New York: New American Library, 1980), 84.

The Finns maintained they were waging a defensive struggle, seeking only to regain the territory lost to the Soviet Union in the Winter War. Even the name "Continuation War" is controversial since it may indicate an acceptance of the official Finnish view. Throughout the course of the entire war, the Finnish government held that their conflict was a continuation of the Winter War and separate from, albeit simultaneous with, the German invasion. As the war progressed this position became increasingly unacceptable to both the Allies and the Germans. In December, 1941, Great Britain, under pressure from the Soviet Union, declared war on Finland. The United States, however, chose to remain officially at peace with Finland for the duration of World War II, though diplomatic relations with Finland became quite strained. As a co-belligerent of Germany against the Soviet Union, Finland could hinder American and British interests. In the middle of 1944 it appeared that Finland might not be able to escape from her precarious situation intact as a nation. Caught between the interests of great powers, she was unable to exit a war she had not wanted to fight.

The degree of Finnish participation and cooperation with the Germans in Operation Barbarossa is a controversial issue. The Germans exploited a troop transit agreement with Finland in order to place five divisions in Finnish territory to participate in Barbarossa.[2] Finland and Germany posed a threat to two strategic concerns of the Soviet Union and the Allies: the Murmansk-Leningrad railway that funneled Lend-lease aid into the Soviet Union, and Leningrad itself. Neither was captured by the Finns, who stopped their advance into Soviet territory in late December 1941 slightly beyond their

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[2] On September 22, 1940 an agreement was formalized in Berlin providing for the transport of men and material for the Luftwaffe from the Finnish ports of Vaasa and Oulu via Rovaniemi to the German base at Kirkenes in Norway. The Finnish Parliament was not consulted at any time during the negotiations. See Charles Lundin, *Finland in the Second World War*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1957) 88-90.

1939 border. The Finnish battle lines changed little until the Soviets counter attacked in June 1944. Mannerheim was elected President on August 4, 1944 and an armistice was declared on September 5, 1944. Throughout the Continuation War Finland maintained a delicate balancing act. Finland had to do enough to placate Germany and thereby receive economic aid, but it could not afford to seriously threaten Soviet interests.

Berry argues that the positive Finnish image was not tarnished as much as the logic of Great Power politics might suggest.[3] During the Continuation War Finland's coverage in the Anglo-American press was more sporadic than it was during the Winter War, but much more critical. The Anglo-American press expressed divergent views and explanations of Finland's participation in the war. When the invasion of the Soviet Union began both the Anglo and the American press expressed some sympathy for Finland's desire to regain lost territory. The press also expressed an appreciation for Finland's difficult geographical and political situation.

The Anglo-American press grew more and more critical of Finland after her army advanced past the pre-Winter War border in September, 1941.[4] The British, who were officially at war with Finland, became especially merciless towards Finland, holding it responsible for its own position as it tried to exit from the war. Views towards the Finnish people changed from the Winter War, as the Finns were thought to be a small nation caught up in their own petty concerns unable to see the big picture of World War II. Yet how could this be for the gallant people who had just sixteen months before had been the outpost of Western civilization? This problem was solved in the Anglo and American press to a certain extent by differentiating between

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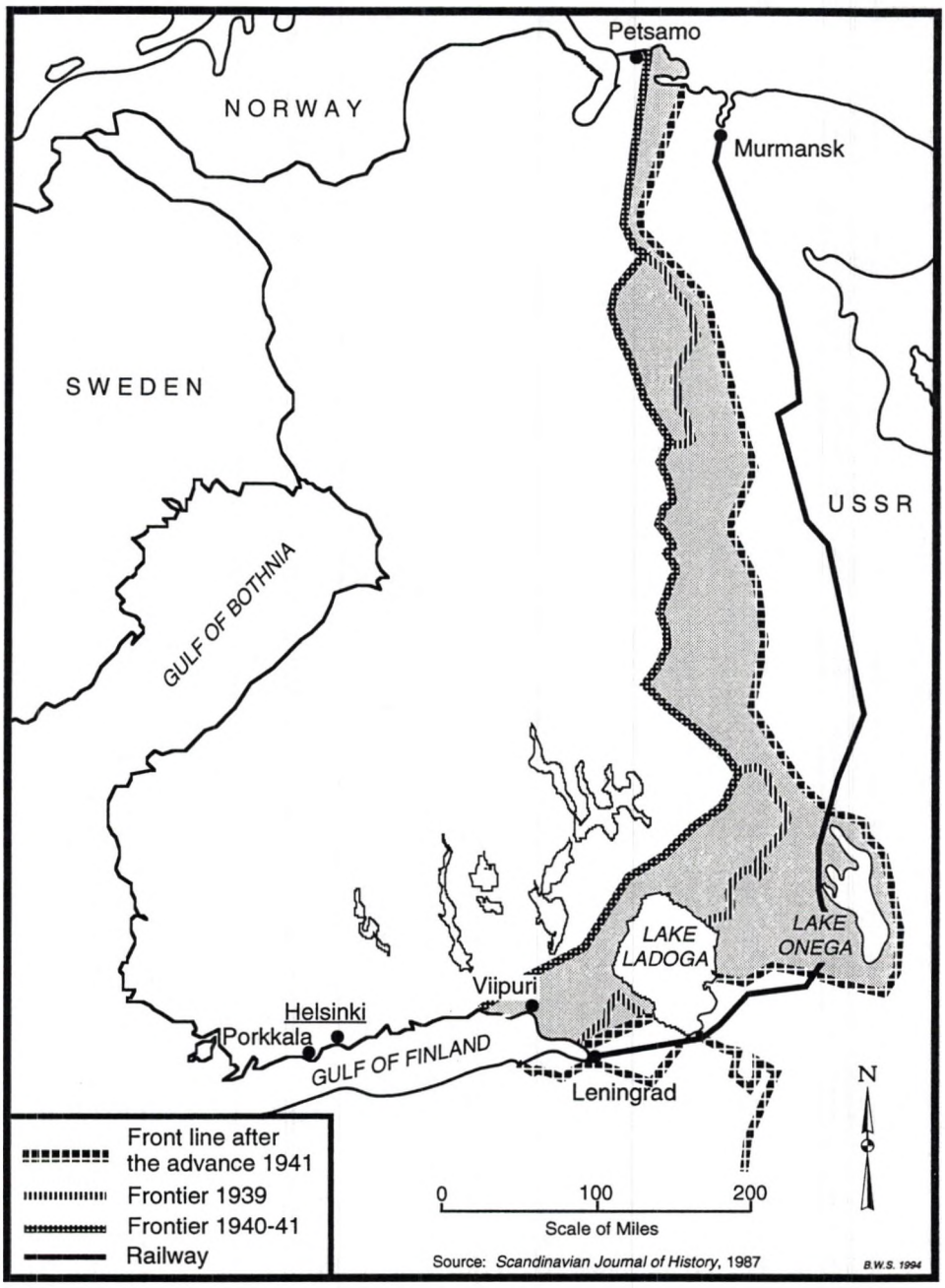
[3] R. Michael Berry, *American Foreign Policy and the Finnish Exception*, 175.

[4] See Carl Gustav Mannerheim, *The Memoirs of Marshall Mannerheim*, 426-28; Charles Lundin, *Finland in the Second World War*, 152-53. The Finns moved here to establish a shorter, more defensible frontline.




Map 3. Farthest Finnish Advance into the Soviet Union December, 1941

the Finnish people and their government which was portrayed as not acting in the best interests of their people.[5] The Finnish government was thought to have time and time again bumbled opportunities to exit from the war.

Opinions in the Anglo and American press differed on the grounds for Finland's withdrawal. The press in both countries recognized, however, that the Finns hoped for mediation on their behalf by the United States and Great Britain with the Soviet Union. As it had during the Winter War, the United States offered its "good offices" to bring the Soviet Union and Finland to the peace table, but the United States did not (and could not) provide Finland with any concrete guarantees. Though both the United States and Great Britain hoped that Finland would obtain a separate peace, neither was willing to jeopardize their relationship with the Soviet Union.

## Anglo Press Opinion

The Anglo press made it clear it would neither tolerate nor excuse any nation's actions that would make the defeat of Nazi Germany more difficult. The week of the invasion of Russia, the *Economist* admitted that it was natural that Finland should want to be rid of Russia. Finland had been warned, however, of Great Britain's resolve to fight Germany, and Finland must bear the consequences. The *Economist* contended that Finland was no longer an independent country. In November it urged the British government to declare war on Hungary, Rumania and Finland. The decision to declare war on Finland was not without regret and hesitation. To the

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[5] Ernst von Born, a Swedish-Finn cabinet member, expressed concern over the Finnish governments' policy of seizing Soviet territory. In an interview with a Swedish journal that was never released by Finnish censors, he spoke of the stone that had marked the Finnish-Russian border for over three hundred years. "Into it are chiseled the words: 'Gustavus Adolphus King of Sweden, established the farthest boundary of the country here. With God's help may the boundary last.' If we go across this boundary, I am afraid that Gods's help will no longer be with us. See Charles Lundin, *Finland in the Second World War,* 140-41.

*Economist* the Finns were a gallant people who were unfortunately blinded by a hatred of Russia. Finland's dilemma, the *Economist* insisted, was of its own making.[6]

In September of 1941 the *Manchester Guardian Weekly* gave a running coverage of Finland's position in the war. The Finns by then had nearly recovered all their lost territory, as though, observed the *Guardian*, the Russians had given it to them. This appearance caused speculation on the prospects for a separate peace. The Finns described as "that fine race which lost too many of its men" in its previous war with Russia, were thought to desire a separate peace. The Germans, however, were anticipated to do all they could to prevent it. The *Guardian* did not relish the prospect of war with Finland stating that Great Britain "would like to see Finland cease to be the friend of its enemy," before circumstances might make her an actual enemy. If Finland continued its war, the *Guardian* concluded, Finland would be fighting for Hitler's victory and the defeat not only of Russia but Britain and her Allies. They would be fighting for the destruction of liberty and bear the moral responsibility of the aggressor powers. The Finnish situation was held to be a tragedy for the hard working Finnish people, but nevertheless, if Finland continued to fight the Soviet Union then she was Britain's enemy.[7]

In December the *Times* noted that Great Britain would reluctantly declare war on Finland, after trying to avoid it for several weeks. Finnish policy forced Great Britain's decision. While it was understandable that Finland wanted its lost territory back, the *Times* criticized the Finns for not trying diplomatic means. They contacted neither London nor Washington before advancing past their old frontiers into the Soviet Union. The Finns,

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6 "Right About Turn," *Economist* 28 June 1941, 841-44, and "Hitler's Mercenaries" *Economist* 8 November 1941, 560.

7 *Manchester Guardian Weekly*, 5, 12, and 19 September 1941.

feared the *Times,* may have been deceived as the Germans did not care for Finnish rights, just their military support.[8]

The Anglo press reported on living conditions within Finland during the war and presented a rather bleak picture. It also commented that the Finnish people wanted peace. The *Times* reported increasing food shortages and a rise in infant mortality rates. British Commando raids in Norway created anxiety in Finland, alleged the *Times,* by increasing speculation of a joint Anglo-Soviet invasion.[9]

Germany's economic stranglehold on Finland was readily recognized. The *Economist* assessed that Germany's greatest weapon in influencing Finland was her economic supremacy. Conditions within Finland were deteriorating as the war progressed. The *Manchester Guardian Weekly* was sympathetic towards the Finnish people who had been among the best fed peoples of Europe prior to World War II but were now in a state of semi-starvation. Germany was said to have robbed Finland of her political independence and exploited her economically with unfavorable terms of trade causing an increase in inflation already fueled by a labor shortage.[10]

The *Times*, though supportive of a hard line towards Finland, recognized that Finland was unlike the Nazi vassals across Europe from Vichy to Bulgaria. The leaders of all countries that were allies or co-belligerents of Germany, except for Finland, had gone to Bertchesgarden to meet with Hitler. Reports alleged both President Ryti and Marshall Mannerheim had refused to go. The Finns were not willing to step up their war effort for Germany, the *Times* believed, for if they had, the Finns certainly

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8 "Zero Hour Near for Finns" *Times*(London) 1 December 1941, 3 & "British Warning Ignored, Finns Still Silent" 5 December 1941, 4.

9 "Uneasy Days in Finland, Belated Peace Efforts," *Times*(London) 14 January 1942, 3.

10 "The Misery of Finland," *Manchester Guardian Weekly* , 29 May 1942, 324.

would have recalled soldiers to the front who had been released to work in the fields and factories. Furthermore, asserted the *Times*, the Finns clearly recognized that the war was lost.[11] In fact, by the time of the German surrender at Stalingrad, the Finns realized that the war had turned against Germany. The next day, February 3, 1943, a conference was held at Mannerheim's headquarters between him and leaders of the civilian government and they concluded that Finland should get out of the war as soon as possible. At that time, however, the Finns judged Germany still strong enough to prevent Finland from quitting the war.[12]

At the Casablanca conference in January, 1943, Roosevelt and Churchill met with their combined Joint Chiefs of Staff. To reassure Stalin, who was suspicious of the British and Americans cutting a deal with Germany behind his back, Roosevelt declared that the war would only end with the unconditional surrender of all enemies. This declaration was aimed directly at Hitler and Churchill readily accepted it. But did this mean that Finland too must surrender unconditionally? The Anglo and American press were to disagree on this point. The decision to pursue unconditional surrender unexpectedly gave the Soviet Union the opportunity to control Eastern Europe; as the Red Army marched all the way to Berlin they created Communist governments in the countries they liberated.[13] Finland, however, was able to avoid this "liberation."

By February, 1944, the *Economist* thought the Casablanca formula applied to Finland. The Soviet Union, therefore, had the right to demand nothing less than Finland's unconditional surrender. Finland was the only

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11 "Finland Holds Back," *Times*(London), 6 May 1943,3.

12 Carl Mannerheim, *The Memoirs of Marshal Mannerheim*, 460-61, and Charles Lundin, *Finland in the Second World War*, 175-176.

13 George Brown Tindall and David Shi, *America: A Narrative History*, (New York: Norton, 1992), 1192.

axis country in which war against the Soviet Union was backed by democratic public opinion. This was a fatal mistake, the people's patriotic and democratic sin. War is indivisible, the *Economist* argued, and Finland's war merged with Germany's. Nonetheless, a continued war with a harsh peace settlement would be a "heaven sent gift to the Nazis." The *Economist* thought it was vital that the Russian occupation of Finland, which it thought to be inevitable, not make the Finns feel they had lost their independence.[14] The Soviet demands on Finland, deemed the *Economist,* were much less than the Allies surrender demands on Italy, yet the negotiations were unexpectedly protracted.[15]

After the Soviet Union and Finland finally agreed to an armistice, the *Economist* commented on the severity of Finland's reparations. It noted Finland would have to hand over its export surplus for the next thirty-three years. If that were to be the case Finland would be unable to import necessities for the maintenance, let alone expansion of agriculture and industry. To survive Finland would require loans or credits from the West.[16] This obvious dependence on future assistance from the West caused the *Economist* to describe the logic of Finland's behavior, which was thought to be strikingly "unrepentant," as a diplomatic puzzle. Finland was being treated with real generosity by the Soviet Union considering the Finns had continued to fight as long as they thought that Germany could win.[17]

The *Manchester Guardian Weekly* stated in March, 1944, that the difficulties the Finns were experiencing as they tried to exit from the war were created by "themselves when they chose to ride the Nazi tiger." In June the

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14 "Russia and Finland," *Economist* 19 February 1944, 233-34.
15 "Finland and Italy," *Economist* 11 March 1944, 332.
16 "Reparations," *Economist* 2 September 1944, 314.
17 "The Unrepentant Satellite," *Economist* 9 September 1944, 345.

*Guardian* reiterated its position that Finland had not chosen wisely and now had to pay the price. "The Finnish government backed the wrong horse as lamentable as any punter in history."[18] After the Soviets and Finns agreed to an armistice in September 1944, the *Times* indicated the Finns had been more fortunate than they perhaps deserved. It commented that the Finns had managed to obtain much less onerous terms than they had been offered in March, despite the losses the Finns had inflicted on "our Russian Ally and help given to our German enemy." The armistice terms and treatment of Finland, thought the *Times*, showed that Stalin was making good on his assurances to Great Britain and the United States not to overthrow the existing social and economic structures of Eastern Europe. Finland, however, was to prove to be the exception, not the rule of Stalin's policy in Eastern Europe as the Red Army created the iron curtain. The *Times* also expressed a high regard for the Finnish people stating there was reason to hope that Finnish dourness, industry and resourcefulness would be able to overcome the difficulties.[19]

Although Finland was no longer portrayed in the Anglo press as the defender of Christian and, hence, Western civilization, there remained a common theme from the Winter War. The British priority was to secure the defeat of Nazi Germany and nothing else was to interfere with the pursuit of that goal. Finland's position was regrettable, but the Finns had to take responsibility for themselves and their own actions. Likewise, the British had to take care of themselves, and were doing so.

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[18] *Manchester Guardian Weekly* , 3 March 1944, 113 and 23 June 1944, 335.
[19] "Terms for Finland," *Times*(London), 20 September 1944, 5.

## American Press Opinion

After the invasion of the Soviet Union in June, 1941 a *Minneapolis Morning Tribune* editorial defended the Finnish position. Finland was said to be between the devil and the deep blue sea and that Finland was certain to have been invaded by either the Soviet Union or Germany. Unlike the United States, the *Tribune* observed, neutrality for Finland was out of the question. If the United States justified aiding Stalin because he was deemed to be the lesser menace, the *Tribune* stated, "we should allow the Finns to make the same judgment." It thought that both Finland and the United States were holding their noses and were following the course that each had determined to be in their national interest.[20]

Finland's war aims, thought *Time*, were uncomplicated. The Finns war with Russia was a private war: the Finns sought a more defensible eastern boundary, and wanted Russia to pay for her 1939 attack. *Time* reported, however, the rumor that the Nazis had taken over the Finnish government. In October 1941 *Time* reported Prince Gustaf Adolph of Sweden's tour of the Russo-Finnish front. The prince, asserted *Time*, could see that the Finns were fighting for race and nation. As the namesake of the great Gustavus Adolphus II, the Swedish prince was to know the feeling of the north countryman for the Slavs. The Finns considered themselves Nordics, stated *Time*, while the Nazis were "bogus Nordics." Surprisingly racist in its overtones, *Time* noted that shells had sailed over Prince Gustav's head at the front, "and behind him blond men were killed. Yes, he understood why Finns fought."[21] Apparently, *Time* understood too.

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20 "The Case of Finland," *Minneapolis Morning Tribune*, 30 June 1941, 4.

21 "Uncomplicated War Aims," *Time* 4 August 1941, 32, "Why Finns Fight," *Time*, 20 October 1941, 29.

I. F. Stone, a left-wing writer, criticized Finland and the Unites States' policy towards her. In the *Nation* he declared that the United States should take a hard line while Great Britain should declare war on Finland. Both, thought Stone, had been too dilatory regarding the Finnish government, which was described as having turned a cold shoulder to peace proposals. The Finnish people themselves, Stone stated, were denied access to the truth. He charged that the Finns had severed the Murmansk-Leningrad railway and that Mannerheim was a fascist and a German sympathizer.[22] Concerns over Russian supply lines and fascist tendencies in Finland were to have a detrimental effect on Finland's image in the United States during the Continuation War.

The *Nation* continued to criticize Finnish policies. Maurice Feldman alleged that Finland was governed by a military dictatorship entirely under German control. Feldman stated drastic changes in Finnish political life had not been noticed abroad. Foreign trade to Finland had been cut off by the Nazis. Power had supposedly shifted from the Diet to the Army General Staff so that Mannerheim and his officers were the rulers of Finland. Feldman reported that 85 percent of the Finnish officer corps had belonged to the "Nazi Lapua movement."[23]

In May 1942, the *New York Times* suggested that unrest was stirring in Finland and other East European countries. The counselor of the Finnish legation promptly responded. He stated in a letter to the editor that since Russia was aligned with the West, Finland did not see the World War as being for or against democracy. He restated Tanner's statement of Finland's war aims as being only freedom and defense of democracy. The Finns thought peace to be possible only if the Soviet system collapsed or a general

[22] I. F. Stone, "Fumbles for Finland," *Nation*, 15 November 1941, 475-76.
[23] Maurice Feldman, "Changes in Finland," *Nation* 21 March 1942, 339-40.

world peace was restored. This position was quickly attacked by another letter to the editor. The writer asserted that the fact was that the Finns hated too well, and that they hated the Russians more than the issues the rest of the world was fighting for. The writer considered Finland an "unfortunate nation" but considered her efforts to be pointless.[24]

In June, 1942, Marshall Mannerheim had his seventy-fifth birthday and was visited in Finland by a surprise guest, Adolph Hitler. This "unwelcome surprise," *Time* noted, was not mentioned on Finnish radio. Speculation throughout the Allied nations was that undoubtedly this visit was to request Finnish participation in a new offensive against Leningrad, the Murmansk railway or both. If the Finns were to co-operate with Hitler, *Time* warned that they may have the unwelcome surprise of war with their one time best friend, the United States.[25]

The American press began to comment on the suffering the Finns were enduring, and how the common people longed for an end to the war. A *New York Times* editorial described Finland as war weary and suffering from intense inflation that had caused the quintupling of land prices since the war began. The economic consequences were being felt in every family as the Finns were reported to be wearing cardboard shoes. The acute manpower shortage was hindering the conversion to a war economy. *Newsweek* stated that "thankless years of German cold and hunger" were visible in the faces of the 3.8 million Finns. The food shortage was supposedly so severe that the 17,000 Soviet POWs had died as a result. *Newsweek* did not accept Finland's

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24 "Spring Reinvigorates Finns" *New York Times* 14 May 1942, p6 and 16 May 1942, p8.
25 "Unwelcome Surprises," *Time*, 15 June 1942, 30.

"inexplicable theory of a private war" as justification for Finland's continued participation in the war.[26]

Even though some segments in the American press had concluded that Finland was a Nazi satellite, there was evidence of friction between Germany and Finland. Hermann Goering, in a speech to mark the anniversary of Hitler's ascension to power, declared that the Winter War of 1939-1940 "was perhaps the cleverest campaign in world history." Goering alleged the Soviets deliberately conducted the war in a fumbling fashion to fool Germany and the world about their strength. The Finns protested this suggestion bitterly. *Newsweek* stated that Finland wanted peace but needed food from Germany. The *New York Times* sided with the Finns, stating that Finnish fighting qualities had caused the Soviet setbacks in the Winter War. Then the Finns were fighting a defensive war on their native soil, as the Russians were doing now against the Nazis. The *New York Times* also commented that the Finns were doing less well in the present war which was aggressive. Sympathizing with Finland's plight the *New York Times* observed that "Finland wanted to be left alone but could not be." Almost the only way out of the war for Finland that *Newsweek* saw was United States intervention.[27]

In 1943 the sympathizers and critics of Finland began to polarize. A *New York Times* article by Arthur Krock argued that a realistic decision of America's relations should be based on "who is not with us is against us." If the basis of the postwar peace, however, was to be the Atlantic Charter rather than power politics, Krock argued that that required the promise to Finland of its independence and territory. A *New York Times* editorial contended that so

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26 "Finns Long for End of War," *New York Times*, 27 September 1942, "Fettered Finns," *Newsweek*, 14 December 1942, 74.

27 "Hitler and Goering Warn Europe Faces Red Peril," *New Yor k Times* 1 January 1943, 1, and "Finland vs. Goering," 5 February 1943, 14, "Finland Reaching Crossroads" *Newsweek*, 15 February 1943, 42.

far the United States had been patient and sympathetic towards the Finns, but, even so, America's responsibility did not end there. The United States had a duty to replace German supplies if Finland could withdraw from the war because, observed the *New York Times*, "little nations cannot go it alone."[28] Finland was said to be trying hard to find a way out of her perilous situation. Despite her present alignment, the *New York Times* thought that, "Finland deserves our sympathy, for she is one of the small nations victimized by her mighty neighbors." Finland could well become a test case, in fact a show case, for the Atlantic Charter as applied to small nations. [29] By considering it a test case, the American press raised the status of Finland's independence among the Allies in general and the American public in particular.

*Time* argued, however, that just because the United States maintained relations with Finland did not mean that the Allies would or could keep the Russians out of Finland. Nonetheless, after the defeat of Stalingrad, the only hope left for the Finns was that the United States or Great Britain would save Finland from the Russians. President Ryti, opening Finland's parliament 1943, said that the Finnish people could look forward to the future with confidence because the "Civilized nations cannot sink so deep that they will not acknowledge every people's right to life and liberty."[30] *Time* interpreted Ryti's statement as an appeal to the United States and Great Britain for the preservation of Finnish independence.

The *New Republic* asserted that most Americans had been mixed up about Finland in recent years, seeing her as a brave little country whose people were admired and whose athletes, composers, musicians, and prompt

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[28] Arthur Krock, "Position of Finland Again to Forefront," *New York Times* 9 February 1943, "Finland's Hard Choice," *New York Times*, 26 February 1943.
[29] "War Weary Finland," *New York Times* 17 February 1943, 20.
[30] "Confidence in Helsinki," *Time*, 15 February 1943, 31-32.

payments on a small debt appealed to American national sentiment. Too much had been made of Finnish democracy, contended the *New Republic*, their government was a natural Nazi ally. In determining American policy "sentimentality and glorifications must be absent in our thoughts," warned the *New Republic*.[31] Finland had made a mistake and now had to suffer the consequences for trying to crush Russia when she thought she had the opportunity.

The *New York Times* re-emphasized Finland's test case status, stating that Finland's will for peace could not be doubted. In an editorial it argued that since the United States was not at war with Finland, its surrender need not be unconditional. A Finnish peace, furthermore, would be a good foundation for future peace.[32]

Jack Gerber argued forcefully in the *Nation* against a soft line towards Finland. Nazi propaganda claimed Finland was fighting to help prevent Bolshevism from dominating the world. According to Gerber, Finland was not a democracy, but was as thoroughly occupied by Germany as Denmark. He alleged that Finland did not particularly want American friendship. On the first anniversary of Pearl Harbor , Finnish government officials toasted Japanese victory at the Japanese embassy in Finland. Nor was Finland merely fighting for her independence. Finns were alleged to be fighting on every section of the Russian front. Therefore, concluded Gerber, the United States should not come to Finland's aid as it would only help Germany.[33] That Gerber's three assumptions were incorrect did not hinder their adoption by more and more critics of Finland in the United States during the war. The *Nation* continued to chastise the Finns who, according to Joachim Joesten, had

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31 "Finland's Peace Feelers," *New Republic* 1 March 1943, 268-69.
32 "Finland as a Test Case," *New York Times*, 3 March 1943, 22.
33 Jack Gerber, "Finland's 'Peace' Offensive," *Nation*, 13 March 1943, 379.

only themselves to blame for their predicament. "Whatever the Finns cultural achievements and their lonely heroism in 1939," argued Joesten, it was absurd to think of Finland as a democracy fighting a defensive war. Democracy, he contended, could not survive in any nation that admitted Hitler's legions.[34]

As prospects of a separate peace increased, the *New York Times* continued to argue that Finland's peace would be a test of the pledges and policies of the United Nations. The *New York Times* stated that Great Britain and the United States had to shoulder some responsibility for Finland's fate since they pressured Finland to make peace. Finland had, an editorial observed, "always been in category by herself in World War II," and she never did formally join the Axis. The defeat of Germany and postwar international organization would eliminate any threat to Leningrad and, hence, any Soviet need for Finnish territory. The *New York Times* believed that Finland was entitled to a just peace and full protection of the United Nations' declarations.[35] An editorial in March argued that Secretary of State Cordell Hull's advice to the Finns to get out of the war implicitly assumed some responsibility for Finland's ultimate fate, yet, complained the *New York Times*, "we have failed to offer the Finns any assurances."[36] A month later in discussing the popularity of the Finns in the past, the *New York Times* commented that their democratic "middle way," like Sweden's, was in some respects ahead of the United States and Great Britain. "They were good people before the war, we do not suppose they are bad now."[37]

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34 Joachim Joesten, "Finland Waits to Long," *Nation*, 4 December 1943, 658-660.
35 "Finland Seeks Peace," *New York Times* 16 February 1944, 16.
36 "Finland: A Test of the Peace," *New York Times*, 16 March 1944, 18.
37 "Finland's Dilemma," *New York Times* 25 April 1944, 22.

All the speculation in the press about a separate peace for Finland caused Germany to demand reassurances. In June of 1944 the Finnish government knew that if they did not publically declare they would not make a separate peace, then Germany would cut off all aid. The Finnish government became almost paralyzed when faced with binding their nation to a Germany doomed to defeat or surrendering unconditionally to Russia. President Ryti sent a personal promise to Hitler that Finland would not seek a separate peace.[38] After Ryti's letter to Hitler, John Scott, *Time*'s correspondent in Finland, did not anticipate a happy ending for the Finns in July of 1944. His analysis was that Finns would "probably continue to fight for several weeks, until the Russians have achieved a costly military victory which will likely lead to civil war and ultimate devastation." Scott fatalistically observed that Finland's course seemed set.[39] His grim prediction proved to be too pessimistic. The Finns, who had already had a vicious civil war, resolved to rebuild their country after they had obtained a separate peace.[40]

After Finland and the Soviet Union had agreed to an armistice in September, 1944, a *Minneapolis Morning Tribune* editorial discounted the Finnish withdrawal from the war as having been long taken for granted. The editorial judged Soviet demands to be dictated by the present war with Germany. Finland had made a mistake by not surrendering earlier. The *Minneapolis Tribune* also thought that the treatment of Finland would be a test of postwar Soviet intentions.[41] A *New York Times* editorial judged the armistice to be an old fashioned military settlement and concurred that Finland had waited too long to get out of the war. The *New York Times* took

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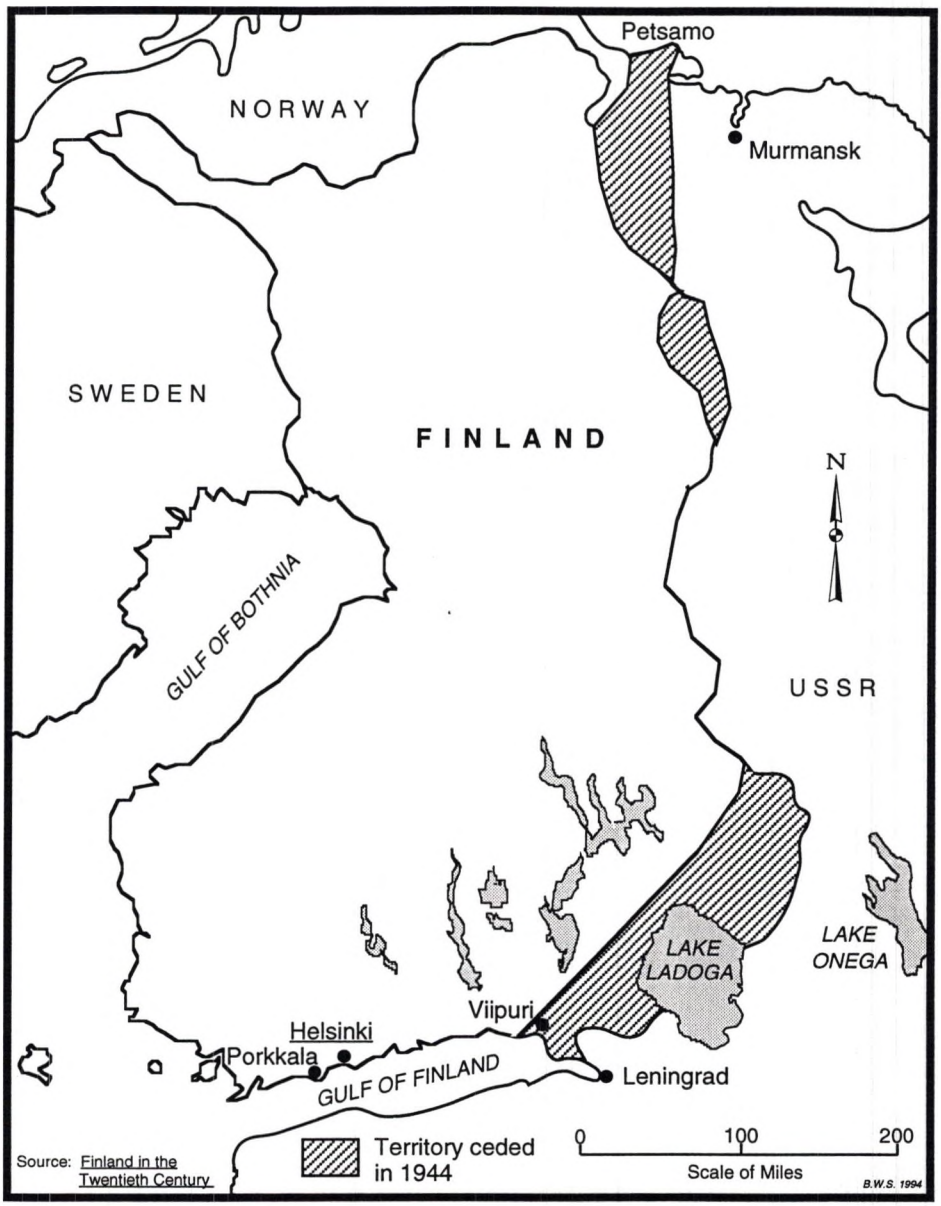
38 Charles Lundin, *Finland in the Second World War*, 210-222.

39 "Finland, Bewitched and Betrayed," *Time* 10 July 1944, 34.

40 For a description of the Finnish Civil War see John Wuorinen, *A History of Finland*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1965) 216-224.

41 "Finland Drops Out," *Minneapolis Morning Tribune*, 5 September 1944.




Map 4. Finnish Territory Ceded to the Soviet Union by the 1944 Armistice

satisfaction in the outcome, however, because the "annexation of Finland would have been a tragedy for the principles of peace and justice."[42]

The terms of the peace settlement for Finland were harsh. The Finns were to withdraw to the 1940 borders and disarm all German soldiers on Finnish soil. The Finns were to lease the Porkkala peninsula, only twenty-five miles from Helsinki, to the Russians for 50 years. The Finnish territory ceded to the Soviet Union represented 12 percent of Finland's prewar area, and an even greater portion of some of Finland's economic resources, including 25 percent of its hydroelectric power potential. Finland's war dead between 1939 and 1945 has been estimated to be 85,000, or 2 percent of Finland's total population.[43]

## Summation

The American press did not give Finland as much coverage during the Continuation War as it had during the Winter War and the coverage was less favorable. Finland was recognized as being in a difficult situation, but the left wing publications considered Finland to responsible for her own troubles. Gone from the press reports were images of "Valiant Finland," except for when articles were attempting to debunk the heroic image of Finland that remained in American public opinion from the Winter War. The press, particularly the *New York Times*, expressed sympathy for the plight of the Finnish people. The fate of Finland, furthermore, was held as a precursor for the postwar era.

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42 "Footnotes to Finlandia," *New York Times*, 21 September 1944.

43 See Fred Singelton, *A Short History of Finland*, 138-139; and John Wuorinen, *A History of Finland*, 382. Even the cease fire was disadvantageous to the Finns who ceased military hostilities on September 4, 1944 while the Soviets did not cease military operations until September 5, 1944. Thus the Soviets prolonged "an unchivalrous one-sided shooting for another twenty-four hours." See Antole Mazour, *Finland Between East and West*, (New York: Nostrand, 1956), 168.

Great Britain placed more emphasis on Finland's complicity with Germany during the war and that the Finns could have simply chosen not to enter the war. The British press gave the impression that Finland decided to exit the war only after it was clear that Germany would not win. The American press, with the exception of the hard left which argued that the Nazis were running Finland, was more willing to accept the Finnish position that the Finns got out of the war as soon as they thought they were able. Both the Anglo and American press portrayed the Finnish people as war weary and wanting peace while suffering severe wartime conditions. Finland was anticipated to be a test case of the postwar peace. The image of Finland had been tarnished and perhaps became a bit more realistic at the end of the Continuation War, although during the war the Anglo-American press often did not present an accurate portrayal of conditions in Finland. Looking back on World War II, the press could agree that Finland "could point to great bravery on the part of its people, but little wisdom on the part of its leaders."[44]

The image of "Valiant Finland" from the Winter War was not forgotten. With the wide ranging battles in the Pacific, Europe, and Africa, the public had to be reminded of Finland's position vis-a-vis Germany and the Soviet Union. Despite the tangling complexities of Finland's diplomatic situation, Finland was but a sideshow for the Allies in World War II. Press coverage tended to try and prove that Finland's behavior in the Continuation War was not so much valiant as it was a tragic misfortune or, perhaps, opportunistic and revengeful. Once Finland had obtained peace, the press went back to the "Honest Finland" image as it anticipated that hard working, thrifty Finns would be able to rebuild their country. Although Finland had been criticized for their participation in the war, once they were out and it was

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44 Charles Lundin, *Finland in the Second World War*, 256.

apparent that Finland had not contributed to an Axis victory, the Anglo-American press appeared willing to "forgive," and forget, with more interest in the latter.

Finland had gone from the hero of the "Free" world in the Winter War to a forgotten and forsaken nation as World War II drew to a close. Facing a very uncertain future, the Finns had learned painfully that they could not expect any help to come from the United States and Great Britain. So the Finns set out to establish peaceful relations with the Soviet Union and to rebuild their country. After surviving two wars with the Soviet Union in five years, they still had a very difficult time facing them.

Berry argues that the "Honest Finland" and "Valiant Finland" images were the foundation for Finnish-American relations during and after World War II. In the Continuation War, however, the "Valiant" image disappeared almost entirely to be replaced by an image of Finland as an "unfortunate" or possibly "obstinate" country. The Anglo and American press differentiated between the Finnish people and the Finnish government to account for the change in their stance towards Finland from the Winter War. Berry focused primarily on the image of Finland's foreign policy as it related to the policy objectives of the isolationists and internationalist press in America. In this regard his analysis is insightful and helpful. Nevertheless, he neglects the American press' impression of the Finnish people apart from their utility in supporting a particular agenda.

While the press coverage of Finland undoubtedly was affected by foreign policy preferences, press images and perceptions of Finland revealed genuine biases and assumptions that were formed separately from the concerns of foreign policy. In fact, these assumptions may have actually influenced opinions on foreign policy. This is, in effect, what made Finland a

special case during the Continuation War. A nation that could be considered an enemy was treated with considerable sympathy. It is impossible to determine to what degree the press created public opinion rather than merely reflected it, but it is clear that good will toward's Finland did carry over from the Winter War through the Continuation War. Berry asserts that the postwar relationship between the United States and Finland was based on the "Honest" and "Valiant" Finland paradigms rather than the dictates of Cold War politics. In 1944, anyone trying to predict Finland's future would be looking through a glass darkly.

## IV. THE YEARS OF DANGER 1945-1948

*To get out of a difficulty,*
*one must usually go through it.*
Samuel Easton[1]

Describing 1945 to 1948 as "years of danger" does not imply that the previous five years had been safe and carefree. Rather, it is to point out how phenomenal Finland's survival was and how precarious its independence remained. After surviving two wars with the Soviet Union the Finns still had to drive the Germans out of Lapland, resettle refugees from Karelia once again, and face the threat of a communist takeover from within as well as from without.[2] After September, 1944, Finland was bound by the terms of its armistice agreement with the Soviet Union. By the spring of 1944 two-thirds of the Finns who had left Karelia after the Winter War had returned to their homes, only to see this territory handed back to the Soviet Union under the armistice agreement, making them refugees again for the second time in four years. Finland had to provide for 420,000 Finns who evacuated from areas ceded to the Soviet Union.

Besides having to rebuild itself, Finland was required to make reparation payments. Finland was to provide the Soviet Union with $300 million worth of specific materials at 1938 American gold dollar price levels. The actual cost to Finland of providing these goods has been estimated to be closer to $1 billion. If Finland failed to meet its monthly quota, the Soviets

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[1] Samuel Easton, as cited in *Bless Your Heart*, Series 2, (Edina, MN: Heartland Samples, 1990), calander quotation for January 28th.

[2] Austin Goodrich, *Study in Sisu*, 90, notes that one of the few Finnish books written about the time between 1944 and 1948 was *Vauran Vuodet*, "Years of Danger."

imposed a 5 percent monthly fine. Over 70 percent of the goods that the Soviets requested were machinery, ships, and cable and wire products. These segments of Finnish industry before the war had been small or nonexistent. The Finns were able to meet the first year of their reparation payments largely by the forfeiting existing assets to the Soviet Union, including 104 ships from the Finnish merchant marine. To meet the reparations required the expansion and creation of new industries. The Soviets modified the terms of the treaty and in 1948 reduced the outstanding debt in half. Many Finns viewed the official reduction by the Soviets as an effort to influence the 1948 Finnish elections. The values the Soviets awarded to certain Finnish goods were frequently widely distorted from their actual production costs.[3] The Finns had fought the Soviets for five years to avoid national subjugation, but they were now to find their whole nation, in effect, toiling in a Russian gulag for eight years. The press paid more attention to the reparations problem after 1948, when the most difficult years for Finland already had past.

During these early postwar years Finland, under the guidance Juho Paasikivi, attempted gradually establish its neutrality. In 1946, Paasikivi, who had been Prime Minister since the end of the War, succeeded the ailing Mannerheim as President and served in that capacity through 1955. Paasikivi pursed a policy of peaceful cooperation with the Soviet Union. War ravaged Western Europe was rebuilt after World War II with the assistance of the Marshall Plan. Finland, however, did not accept any Marshall plan aid, though the United States offered it, because it did not want to anger the

[3] John Wuorinen, *A History of Finland*, 388-392. The "Golden Schooners" illustrate the price distortion the Finns suffered. These 90 wooden, 300 ton ocean going ships had their price fixed at $15,000 each,but the cost of producing each one amounted to $180,000.

Soviet Union.[4] It was not until 1947 that the official peace treaty for Finland with the Soviet Union and the British Commonwealth was signed in Paris, formalizing the end of hostilities. Finland really came to the attention of the Anglo-American press in 1948 when, after the coup in Czechoslovakia, Stalin requested that the Finns come and negotiate a mutual assistance pact.

Throughout these years of danger Finland's image was on a roller coaster ride. With the end of World War II, the basis for perceiving Finland in Great Britain and the United States changed as their relationship with the Soviet Union changed. The press in both nations oscillated between considering Finland a western democracy or a Soviet satellite. Opinions correspondingly varied between considering Finland to have been a tragic victim or to be guilty for its predicament. The Finns were praised in both nations, however, for their workman like discipline and industriousness in tackling their own domestic problems. The coverage of Finland was sporadic except for 1948 when Finland was for a brief time in the spotlight of East-West relations.

## Finland' American Press Image, 1945 to 1948

In February 1945 *Newsweek* found spic and span Helsinki to be in sharp contrast to war devastated Leningrad. Helsinki was already a peacetime city with no blackout or curfew. The Finns orientation towards the United States, *Newsweek* commented, was maintained during the war as Helsinki theaters showed Hollywood movies. The Finnish people did not believe that that they had been defeated. *Newsweek* observed, "a certain air of complete impenitence," was apparent among the Finnish people. Finland's outlook

[4] Max Jakobson commented, "the Marshall Plan was designed to save Europe from Communism; Finland may have saved herself from Communism by saying no to the Marshall Plan." See Max Jakobson, *Finnish Neutrality*, 60. Finland did, however, profit indirectly from the Marshall Plan, as the countries that received Marshall Plan aid had hard currency to pay for Finnish exports.

was relatively optimistic: most of her remaining industry was intact and in good shape; an immense market in Great Britain was waiting; and Sweden and the Soviet Union had assisted with Finland's food shortage. The Russians had demonstrated their desire to live in harmony by sending foodstuffs to Finland that were not plentiful in the Soviet Union. The fundamental problem facing the Finns, *Newsweek* said, was psychological, the Finns were stubborn. If they could change their attitude towards Russia then they could anticipate a peaceful future.[5]

As winter approached in 1945, George Axelson reported on the Scandinavian outlook in the *New York Times.* He thought that Norway and Sweden would eat well but would probably freeze, and for the Finns, the prospects were pretty much the same except that, "they are more likely to starve as well." Furthermore, Axelson commented, Finland's situation was made worse because it had fought on the losing side and therefore had to pay reparations to the Soviet Union. Finland was experiencing phenomenal inflation as the currency had been devalued 60 percent in four months to continue the flow of exports. Labor rates were expected to increase 165 percent in that year. Finland had a housing shortage despite having plenty of wood, due to shortages of concrete, nails, iron, and other building materials. A capital levy had been raised, even shoes and hats were taxed. Finnish workers did not want to work overtime because all that did was make extra money for the tax collector. The Finns seemed to be in for a strenuous ordeal.[6]

In December, 1946, the *New York Times* thought that Finland's request for a $150 million loan from the United States probably would not be granted on the grounds that it would go directly to the Soviet Union. Though there

[5] "Tough, impenitent Finland Ticklish Diplomatic Problem," *Newsweek*, 5 February 1945, 25.
[6] George Axelson,"Scandinavian Outlook," *New York Times*, 13 November 1945, 24.

was sentiment for helping the Finns, the United States did not want to be, in effect, paying for reparations to the Soviet Union. The United States' attitude, the *New York Times* insisted, did parallel that of the British: that Finland must get along with the Soviet Union on her own.[7] A year later Finland was still, "as hard up as ever." The Finns were blaming strikes, particularly in the United States, reported the *New York Times*, for causing lags in their reparations. The Finnish Government employed ingenious methods to raise money. Civilians could purchase fancy titles that ranged from $2000 to become a "Statsrad," a state counselor, down to $8 to be an official choir singer.[8]

In April, 1946, Sidney Sulkin wrote in the *New Republic* of a Finnish paradox. Western Europe was more occupied by Allied forces than was Finland. The Finn in the street, Sulkin asserted, was expecting the United States and Great Britain to attack the Soviet Union. Sulkin thought a change had come over Finland. Sisu used to mean whoever had it could bear all difficulties; in 1946 he stated that sisu meant self pity which he alleged to probably be the most common emotion in the country. He thought that the Finns should be pleased with how well they had it. His article was one of the most critical of Finland in the American press during this period.[9]

For the first time since prior to the Winter War, Finland became the subject of a *Foreign Affairs* feature article by Eric Dancy who was a British reporter. The Finns, he observed, never had much political instinct and that compounded their unfortunate position. Language difficulties, he asserted, had much to do with the Finns' political ignorance. Partly due to language, he insisted, the Swedish speaking Finns were better informed. In the postwar

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7 "U.S. likely to bar Finns Bid for Loan," *New York Times*, 1 December 1945, 3.
8 "Finland's Regime Walks Tightrope," *New York Times*, 22 December 1946, 22.
9 Sidney Sulkin, "The Finnish Paradox," *New Republic*, 1 April 1946, 433-34.

trials of wartime governments, Finnish democracy was on trail. Dancy commented that people ignorant in political matters cannot govern themselves. The Finns were now focused inward because of their economic troubles. Their exactness in meeting their payments had caused the Soviets to extend debt payment for two additional years. The Finns had the opportunity to develop important future markets. Finland had to pay the price, however, Dancy said, of ending its experiment with a Scandinavian orientation. Finland could not be considered a neutral country.[10]

*Time* noticed much improvement in Helsinki in the two years since the war. The Finnish calorie level was higher than most of Europe's and Finland was observed to have a degree of freedom unknown in other nations defeated by the Soviet Union. The Finns present situation was by no means easy as Finland had to create a metal and engineering industry from scratch, and their economy was being more and more integrated with the Soviet Union. *Time* speculated as to the causes of Russia's surprisingly lenient treatment: Russia wanted to collect its reparations with little interference; perhaps Russia wanted to avoid a long struggle with Finland; the Russians gained a substantial propaganda advantage for their relations with Scandinavia.[11]

The Finns were described as being frank and honest talkers. Said one Finn to Sam Welles, a *Time* reporter, about Finland's relations with Russia: "Its too bad, Russians are often fine people individually. We have many things in common; we both like to drink. But get them in a mass and they go crazy." Welles did not consider Finland to be a satellite because the Finns had their freedom. "To people whose fiber is almost as hard as the granite ledges that crop out all over their country," he declared, "that means a lot." The

10 Eric Dancy, *Foreign Affairs Quarterly*, April 1946, 513-525.
11 "On Tiptoe," *Time* 5 August 1946, 34.

Finns needed a tough fiber to house the 450,000 emigres from the lost territory in Karelia. The highest estimate of the number of Finns that choose to remain in their homes and live under Soviet rule, he reported, was only 40. If the Finns maintained their "sturdy gait" he predicted that they would be relatively better off than the average Russian in a few years.[12]

A *New York Times* editorial stated that the Finns had lost a considerable part of their territory for their errors. If Finland was left alone, it had a promising future. Unfortunately, the editorial observed, Finland was not being left alone. Although within the grip Russian power, the Finns were not willingly playing the part of Russian stooge.[13]

An editorial in the *Finnish Trade Review* by Sakrai Tuomioja, President of the Bank of Finland, received much notice in the United States. He thanked the United States for giving loans that would allow Finland to pay back everyone on time. Commenting on Finland's present condition he said, "We are poor today but do not feel our place is in the poorhouse." After reporting this the *New York Times* added that Finland's re-entry into world markets was an accomplished fact.[14] It criticized those who termed Finland's armistice conditions as a "soft peace."[15] *Time* observed that despite having to pay the highest per capita reparations to the Soviet Union, conditions in Finland had improved. The Soviets had not sprung any surprises on top of the treaty terms. "Under this treatment," *Time* commented, "which calls mainly for hard work, the industrious Finns have thrived."[16]

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12 Sam Welles, "Nobody's Satellite," *Time*, 16 June 1947, 34.

13 "Finland and the Russians," *New York Times*, 20 May 1947, 24.

14 "Finns to send U.S. More Newsprint," *New York Times*, 24 May 1947, 9. The United States ultimately loaned Finland approximately $120 million through the Export-Import bank. See John Wuorinen, 468.

15 "In the Porkkala Enclave," *New York Times*, 29 August 1947, 16.

16 "Finland's Autumn Cloud," *Time* 1 September 1947, 22.

The American press regarded the Finnish people's spirit to be unbroken. The Finns were thought to have been in a troubling economic and political situation and seemed to be making progress. The press was returning to the "Honest" Finland characterization implying a diligent work ethic. The British press was on the whole more critical of Finland's wartime policy and less sympathetic to its postwar plight.

## Finland's Anglo Press Image, 1945 to 1948

The *Times* saw Finland's elections in March, 1945, as an opportunity for Finland to redeem itself. A new parliament might be able to "lead the country out of the morass of defeat and humiliation in which subservience to Germany has plunged it." The *Times* reflected a very negative view of Finland's involvement in the war. It noted, however, that Finland was the first belligerent to have the opportunity of a fresh start and that no other country in Europe had yet been able to have an orderly democratic election. The *Times* suggested patience may be needed for Finland to rejoin the Western democracies because it would take time for people to recover hold of reality after being exposed to undiluted German propaganda. Certainly neither the United States nor Great Britain wished "to take an excessively harsh view of Finland's recent policy, which both have been predisposed to believe was forced upon a reluctant people by an unrepresentative government." The Finnish people had been "grievously misled."[17] Placing blame for Finland's situation primarily on the Finnish government, the *Times* was able to avoid criticizing the Finnish people.

In December, 1945, Eric Dancy wrote in the *New Statesmen* that the existence of reparations held Finland together economically as both the left and right, for their own reasons, wished to complete the payments on

[17] "Finland at the Polls," *Times*(London), 17 March 1945, 3.

schedule. The country was very much divided, however, over the issue of war guilt. The attitude towards Russia among the Finns, Dancy stated, was largely a matter of age. The older generation, consisting of those such as Mannerheim and Paasikivi, still spoke Russian. The younger generation, he assessed, was curious and open to good relations with the Russians. The middle generation, however, whose opinions were formed during and after the Revolution, was skeptical. He thought that it was a commonly held assumption among the Finns that the Russians would continue to import from Finland what they were presently receiving for free. Trade was bound to influence future Finnish feeling towards Russia.[18]

Under the terms of the Armistice agreement, the Communist party, which had been officially banned in 1930, was once more legalized. In March, 1945, the Communists won 23.5 percent of the popular vote giving them 49 out of 200 seats in parliament.[19] The *Economist* thought with the March, 1945, election of "new men" to the Parliament, the Finnish voters had disavowed the old war policies as only 90 out of the 200 representatives had been reelected. The only doubt about Finland, asserted the *Economist*, was not its economic conditions (Finland did not default on her loans), but its uncertain political future.[20]

Recognizing the importance of economics to foreign policy, the *Economist* warned in 1946 that "political alignments shift with economic exigencies." The Nordic countries could not get coal from Britain so they looked to the Soviet Union. Unless the West recovered, the *Economist* feared that a Nordic bloc could possibly have an Eastern orientation.[21]

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18 Eric Dancy, "The Finnish Outlook," *New Statesmen and Nation*, 22 December 1945, 420.
19 See John Wuorinen, *A History of Finland*, 425.
20 "Finland's New Start," *Economist*, 31 March 1945, 406-407.
21 "A Scandinavian Bloc," *Economist*, 16 November 1946, 792..

In 1947, the *New Statesmen* thought that if it was not special there certainly was something unique about Finland, "the happy freak of Europe." It was the only country that had fought against the Allied powers that was never occupied by foreign troops, it suffered little direct damage from the war, and appeared to have the healthiest economy of any of the belligerents in Europe. Everybody, from Brazil and Great Britain to the United States and the Soviet Union had been helpful to Finland in one way or another. The Finnish working class, whether for material or moral incentives, was working with a "remarkable sense of responsibility and solidarity." The British periodical noted that significant attention in Finland was given to American perceptions. Too much nationalization too fast, some Finns feared, might cause the United States to stop the flow of credit.[22] The pressures of reparations deliveries had required state involvement in some industries, particularly ship building.[23]

In October, 1947 the *Economist* discussed what it considered to be the four strains of Socialism in Europe: Scandinavian, German, East and West European. Temperament and experience of power, asserted the *Economist*, made the "Scandinavian Socialists reformists, interested in improving working conditions and economic efficiency rather than petrified Marxist dogma." Scandinavian socialists desired to maintain Finnish independence but clumsy American foreign policy, it lamented, made Scandinavia look like it was leaning to the left. Five months later, in February, 1948, the *Economist* observed that little weight was often given to the desire of Norway, Sweden, Denmark, and Iceland not to complicate Finland's delicate geopolitical

22 "Finland: The Next Phase," *New Statesmen and Nation*, 22 March 1947.
23 John Wuorinen, *A History of Finland*, 415.

position. This was especially true when they discussed the topic of closer economic and political cooperation with other European countries.[24]

The coverage of Finland between 1945 and early 1948 in the Anglo and American press was favorable and sympathetic. Overall, a change occurred in the tone of the coverage after World War II ended and the postwar objectives of the Soviet Union began to visibly diverge from its wartime Allies, the United States and Great Britain. The Anglo press paid more attention to specific Anglo-Finnish trade issues and the domestic political scene in Finland, and saw reasons to criticize American policy towards Finland and the other Nordic nations. An intriguing dichotomy is present in that during this early postwar period, Finland is sometimes portrayed as a surprisingly lucky country on one hand because it had retained its independence and on the other hand a tragically unfortunate country because of its reparations burden. Finland could in fact be considered both. With the possible exception of being described as "obstinate" and "stubborn" the characterizations of the Finnish people in the Anglo and American press were positive and sympathetic.

## The 1948 Treaty Crisis

Relations between the Superpowers were to deteriorate further in 1948. The Communist seizure of power in Czechoslovakia in February 25, 1948, sent shock waves throughout the West. President Harry Truman was convinced that he was facing the same situation with the Soviets that France and Great Britain had faced ten years earlier with Hitler.[25] On February 23, President Paasikivi received a personal letter from Stalin requesting Finland

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24 "Neighbors of Russia" *Economist*, 25 October 1947, 679-680, and "Northern Light on Mr. Beven," 14 February 1948, 269-271.

25 Walter LaFeber, *America, Russia,and the Cold War 1945-1990*, (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1991), 71.

to conclude a treaty of mutual assistance similar to those the Soviet Union had previously concluded with Hungary and Rumania. Finland was the only European nation bordering the Soviet Union that had not completed a defense agreement with it against German aggression. The letter was made public five days later, on February 28. The West regarded it as part of a Soviet attack against democracy in Eastern Europe. Many in the press thought that Finnish independence would be short lived.

On April 6, 1948, the Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance treaty between Finland and the Soviet Union was signed in Moscow. The whole world seemed to be surprised at the lenient terms of the treaty. The treaty called for Finland to resist any attack against itself or any attack against the Soviet Union through Finnish territory. If necessary the Soviet Union would assist Finland. The treaty was to defend against an attack by Germany or any nation allied with it.[26]

A *New York Times* editorial saw Stalin imitating Hitler's tactics, trying to grab Finland after Czechoslovakia. The editorial was pessimistic, stating that Stalin's blunt demand could only mean the end of Finnish independence and the beginning of Sovietization. It lamented that in 1939 the "sturdy" Finns still dared to defy Russian demands but now they seemed resigned to their fate. Finland was shackled, the editorial insisted, by a treaty concluded with American and British consent. Finland was unable to resist and the United Nations was silent. "While the world watches and waits," the *New York Times* complained, "one more small country is preparing to go to its doom."[27]

John Walker, *Time* correspondent in Helsinki, reported in March that despite the beautiful spring the atmosphere was "hauntingly reminiscent of Europe in 1939." He sensed that Europe could once again be drifting into

[26] For the text of the treaty see Fred Singleton, *A Short History of Finland*, 189-191.
[27] "One by One," *New York Times*, 1 March 1948, p22.

disaster. The Finnish people, who he thought were "Europe's hardest working," had been "knocking themselves out" to meet the Soviet reparations, thereby denying them an excuse to intervene. He described the political response in Finland to be confusion bordering on panic. "As usual the Social Democrats held the key to the situation, and as usual did not know what to do." About the only satisfaction Walker saw for the Finns was that the Swedes were even in a worse flap over the Soviet's treaty request than the Finns.[28]

After the Russo-Finnish treaty had been signed, the *New York Times* took a pessimistic view. The treaty placed Finland firmly in the Eastern Europe bloc even though some "verbal concessions to Finnish sensibilities" raised the illusion of Finnish neutrality. The *New York Times* did not put any confidence in Soviet assurances and considered Finnish neutrality to be a sham. The Soviets had given the same assurance of troops entering only by mutual agreement to Lithuania in 1939. The decisive fact, the *New York Times* asserted, was that Finland was at Russia's mercy. It hoped that Finland would be spared and continue the democratic tradition they had long exemplified, but unless the West gave Finland more support, it had only a slim chance.[29]

*Newsweek*'s Joseph Philips expected Finland to suffer the same fate as the Czechs. For a short time Finland "appeared to be the luckiest of all defeated countries under Russian occupation." Contrary to Philips assertion, Finland was not exactly under "occupation." The causes for Soviet displeasure with Finland were similar to Czechoslovakia. The Finnish Communist party was likely to lose seats in the next election. Finland traded heavily with the West. A Moscow trained cadre lead by Yrjo and Hertta Leino were ready to take power. Now was the time for Stalin to act, but his long

28 "Too Small," *Time* 15 March 1948, 33.
29 "The Russo-Finnish Pact," *New York Times*, 18 April 1948, 24.

range goal, Philips thought, was difficult to discern. Was it to gain control of Scandinavia, which was only accessible via Finland? Or, perhaps, the tightening of Soviet defenses against the pull of the Marshall plan? Both Finland and Czechoslovakia had economic and sentimental attachments to the West.[30] After the treaty agreement was reached *Newsweek* said that the stage had been "set for ostentatious Russian intervention or equally ostentatious non-intervention." Paasikivi had taken the Russians at their word that they wanted peace and dismissed Finland's number one Communist from the Eduskunta, Finland's parliament.[31] Though in retrospect the Finnish newspapers appear to have been correct, the American press regarded their observations to be "window dressing" or ignored them altogether.

Hjalmar Bjornson was the *Minneapolis Tribune* 's editorial reviewer of the foreign language press. He commented that most Finnish newspapers saw little connection between the recent events in Czechoslovakia and Stalin's note to Finland. He noted that Swedish papers, however, were concerned over a Finnish-Soviet defense pact and that a liberal Swedish paper predicted that Finland would be made into another satellite.[32]

The *Minneapolis Tribune* thought that the Finnish-Soviet treaty represented a shift in Soviet tactics. Finland had come off less badly than feared, with Finnish sovereignty preserved. Unlike the "other satellite nations" the Finns' treaty with the Soviets was for ten, not twenty years. The *Minneapolis Tribune*'s editorial analysis was that the mild agreement was due to Russia's need for an attractive model for Norway and Sweden, as well as

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30 Joseph B. Philips, "Background of the Soviet-Finnish Case," *Newsweek*, 8 March 1948, 36.
31 "Finland, Setting the Stage," Newsweek, 31 May 1948, 32.
32 Hjalmar Bjornson, "Press of Other Nations," *Minneapolis Morning Tribune*, 6 March 1948, 6.

Finnish determination and Western resistance following the Communist seizure of power in Czechoslovakia.[33]

The American press anticipated that the moment for Stalin to act had come after his letter to Finland and the Czech coup. Although the American press regretted that Finland would lose her independence, there was no call to go to the defense of Finland. The American press was pleasantly surprised with the lenient terms of the treaty but was not certain why the terms were as they were.

The *Economist* predicted that Finland was likely to experience the fate of Czechoslovakia. Russia could over-run Finland in one day. So far Finland's behavior had been "cautious but correct." In April the *Economist* was surprised and relieved by the terms of the Finnish-Soviet treaty. Europe was in a tinderbox state and the Soviets did not want to touch off another war. The Russians, asserted the *Economist*, remembered 1939 and the Finns had a real bargaining power - inner cohesion and moral strength. Furthermore, both the Finns and the Soviets desired to preserve Finnish neutrality.[34]

In July, 1948 the *Economist* observed that the coercion of Finland would end Swedish neutrality. The July elections passed by uneventfully by the grace of Russia. The Communists had lost 11 seats in the Eduskunta, their total being reduced to 38 seats. The Finns had managed to keep their delicate balance between East and West by a mixture of co-operation and firmness with Russia and the *Economist* concluded that Finland had no reason to change its policy.[35] Russia's good behavior towards Finland, commented the

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33 "Shift in Soviet Tactics," *Minneapolis Morning Tribune*, 8 April 1948, 6.

34 "Next Stage in Finland," *Economist* 6 March 1948, 380-81, and "The Finns Pull it off," 10 April 1948, 577-78.

35 "Communist Defeat in Finland," *Economist*, 10 July 1948, 48 and "The Centre Wins in Finland," 49.

*Economist*, in November, 1948 provided evidence for Sweden to justify its neutral position.[36]

On March 1, 1948 the *Times* compared the events in Finland with what had happened in Czechoslovakia. The *Times* ominously reported, "the Russian sickle flicks warningly at Finland." In country after country, the *Times* reported, the "proper moment" Lenin spoke of was being sought. The present Soviet policy, it summarized, was to keep their hold on the borderlands and to oppose the Marshall plan, because the Soviets feared a prosperous Europe.[37] The *Times* wrote off Finnish independence rather quickly, stating two days later that the actual wording of the treaty would signify little because Russia's purpose was to bring Finland fully within Russia's camp. Finland had, like Czechoslovakia, tried to live on good terms with the Soviet Union since the war. The *Times* cited Finland's behavior in accepting treaty stipulations and fulfilling reparations. The Finns had "sought consistently to be strictly neutral and to build up their country by the quiet staunch democratic methods which have given Finland a specially high place among the free peoples." The *Times* thought that every precedent indicated that the proposed pact would lead to more trouble for the Finns.[38]

A pact similar to that between the Soviet Union and Hungary or Rumania would do more than end Finland's neutrality in the Baltic, asserted the *Times*, it would obligate the Finns to support Soviet aggression. Finland would be placed then on the same footing as the 'People's democracies' of Eastern Europe. Finland did not, however, want to sever its intimate links with the West and Scandinavia. A comparison with Czechoslovakia, cautioned the *Times*, was misleading, not only because it ignored the "sturdy

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36 "Will Sweden Stay Neutral," *Economist*, 27 November 1948, 875.
37 "Soviet Proposal to Finland," *Times*(London), 1 March 1948, p4, and "March Winds," p5.
38 "Finland Under Pressure," *Times*(London), 3 March 1948, p5.

tradition of Finnish independence, but also that undue Soviet pressure would be bad for western public opinion.[39]

After the treaty had been signed, the *Times* reported Finland's President Paasikivi contended that the actual treaty did not change Finland's neutrality stance because through the lease of Porkkala, "Finland's neutrality had already lost its orthodox character."[40] The *Times* thought that the reaction around the world to the Finnish Soviet pact was relief at the light terms for Finland.[41] In July, 1948, however, the *Times* thought that it was still an open question whether or not Finland would follow Czechoslovakia.[42]

The outcome of the Finnish-Soviet treaty left many questions for the *New Statesmen.* Why did the Russians want a treaty at all? Could the Finns have refused? Why were the terms so lenient? And how long will the peace last? The Soviet's original intentions were by no means clear to the *New Statesmen.* "The leniency of the treaty can only be explained by the effect which the Czech crisis had on the world at large and Scandinavia in particular." The Soviets certainly had an eye on Sweden and Norway. Unlike Czechoslovakia, Finland did not expect help from the West; but they knew Russia's actions would affect world opinion abroad. The general opinion in Finland was that the peace would last.[43]

The industriousness of the Finnish people, stated the *Manchester Guardian,* gave the country an atmosphere of relative prosperity. They had set out tenaciously to overcome the obstacles they faced, including the inflation that had taken the cost of living index from 100 in 1938 to 750 in 1948. The *Manchester Guardian* asserted that the Soviet Union changed its policy

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39 "Finland and Russia," *Times*(London), 24 March 1948, p5.
40 "Finnish President on the Pact," *Times*(London) 10 April 1948, p10.
41 "Fettered Finns," *Times*(London) 17 May 1948, p5 .
42 "Finland Votes," *Times*(London), 1 July 1948 p5.
43 "Finland and Russia," *New Statesmen and Nation,* 29 May 1948, 427-28.

towards Finland because of the effect of the Czech crisis on world, especially Scandinavian opinion, not because of Finland's tough stance. The *Guardian* said that however proud, the Russians knew that the Finns would not provoke them. So Moscow sacrificed the Finnish Communists to make a positive impression abroad and they succeed. The danger remained, though, of the Soviets gaining economic control.[44] The *Guardian* thought that the Finnish elections in July were significant because Finland was the only country in the Soviet sphere of influence that had free and fair election. The Finnish vote (only 20 percent for the Communists) was a courageous gesture, displaying the anti-Soviet attitude of the people, but do not forget, added the *Guardian*, that the vote was cast only by the courtesy of their Russian neighbor.[45]

## Summation

A divergence of national interests between the United States and Great Britain is apparent in their press coverage of Finland. The British were interested in economics, restoring trade with Finland to obtain timber products for postwar reconstruction. The United States was attempting to establish its postwar policy and was evaluating geopolitical realities. The press did not perceive a special relationship between the Soviet Union and Finland. They were uncertain about Soviet intentions and motivations. They readily explained the lenient terms of the treaty because of propaganda efforts for the Soviet Union in Western Europe in general and Scandinavia in particular. The calmness in responding to the Soviet request was recognized but considered irrelevant, though the press referred to the

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44 "Finland and Russia: Background of the Political Crisis," *Manchester Guardian Weekly*, 3 June 1948, 13.

45 "Finland's Vote," *Manchester Guardian Weekly*, 8 July 1948, 9.

tightrope walked by the Finnish government. The Anglo and American consensus was that the Soviet Union did what it wanted to Finland regardless of what Finland wanted.

Nevertheless, Finland's position in 1948 was quite surprising. The economy had been reorganized to pay war reparations, the country was being rebuilt, the wartime refugees had been resettled and Finland had a functioning democratically elected government. These were certainly notable accomplishments for a country that bordered the Soviet Union and fought two wars against it. The "Valiant" image of Finland began to reappear as tensions between the wartime Allies began to increase. The "Honest" image reappeared under the guise of the hard working Finns rebuilding their country and meeting their reparation payments. That Finland had been allowed to maintain its democratic institutions was thought almost miraculous to the Anglo and American press, but the future was far from certain. Though the press in both countries recognized that Finland was a functioning democracy that wished to be neutral, the press did not altogether accept Finland's "unorthodox" neutrality.

# V. SURVIVAL AND SUCCESS FINLAND FROM 1949 TO 1955

*What we anticipate seldom occurs,*
*what we least expected generally happens.*
Benjamin Disraeli[1]

The highly tense atmosphere between East and West in 1949 was highlighted by the forming of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Finland's continued existence as an independent nation was by no means certain. Though Finland had for the moment escaped the fate of Czechoslovakia, it nevertheless, still had to cope with the daunting three "R's" of its postwar problems: reparations, resettlement, and reconstruction. A few significant events brought much attention to Finland for short periods during this six year period, but for the remainder of the time Finland was relatively obscure in the Anglo and American press. The Finns concluded their reparation payments to the Soviet Union in September 1952. Seemingly in anticipation of this achievement, the 1952 Summer Olympics were held in Helsinki. In September 1955, the Soviets agreed to withdraw from Porkkala, and in December the Finns secured entry into the United Nations and the Nordic Council. The Finns believed that membership in these organizations legitimized their sovereignty and represented the acceptance by both the East and the West of Finland's neutrality.

The Finns were faced with high inflation caused by the reparation payments to the Soviet Union while making their payments. As strikes could cripple reparation industries and trigger steep fines from the Soviets,

[1] Benjamin Disraeli, *The Works of Benjamin Disraeli, Earl of Beaconsfield*, vol. 8, *Henrietta Temple*, (New York: Walter Dunne, 1904), 88.

workers' wage demands were granted causing a vicious wage price spiral. After they had paid the reparations they needed to find new markets for their goods. The Soviet Union continued to purchase Finnish goods that were uncompetitive on the world market such as locomotives and other metal products. The Anglo and American press raised concerns that Finland's continued trade with the Soviet Union would give the Soviets undue influence on Finland. The press was surprised at the continued level of support for the Communists in Finland, given the determination of the Finnish people to maintain their independence.[2]

The American and Anglo press praised Finland highly for its ability to meet Soviet reparation demands. The "Honest" image of hard working and industrious Finns reappeared. After the reparation payments were completed, the press also presented themes of "Valiant" Finland, a lone democracy on the border of the Soviet Union. The press revealed surprise that Finland continued to be independent. Almost no reference whatsoever to Finland's participation in the Continuation War and the negligible aid it reluctantly gave to Germany could be found in the Anglo and American press. The Anglo and American press reflected a reservoir of goodwill for the Finnish people, even though Finland would not and could not openly support the West in the Cold War. American coverage of Finland, tended to be more favorable than British; however, British coverage of Finland was more extensive than American. While the American press focused on

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[2] The Communists share of the popular vote, the number of votes and the corresponding number of seats they won out of the 200 seat Eduskunta in Finland's first four postwar elections are: 1945 - 23.5 percent (398,600 votes), 49 seats; 1948 - 20.0 percent (375,800 votes), 38 seats; 1951 - 21.6 percent (391,400 votes), 43 seats; 1954 - 21.6 percent (433,500 votes), 43 seats. See John Wuorinen, *A History of Finland*, 424-425. Perhaps this high level of support for the Communist party in Finland encouraged the Soviet Union to anticipate an internal Communist seizure of power in Finland.

Finland individually, the British Press more frequently discussed Finland in relation to the Nordic context, particularly Sweden.

## Press Opinion 1949-1952

The *Economist* thought that Finland would remain safe if Norway and Denmark were to join NATO. Finland's uncertain position was justification for Sweden's neutrality policy. In March, 1949, after Norway had decided to join NATO, the *Economist* commented that Finland was threatened more by ambitious party leaders, particularly the Agrarian Urho Kekkonen, than by any foreign threat. After NATO was officially formed on April 4, 1949, the *Economist* noted the storm that Finland had weathered in the past year. On April 5, 1948, the Finns had signed the Mutual Assistance treaty with the Soviet Union, and a year later NATO was created. Neither of these events lead the Soviet Union to seize Finland.[3]

As Norway's decision to join NATO was awaited, the *Times* asserted in March that Finland was keeping calm with the aid of good nerves. The *Times* thought that in Finland everything seemed "to be freely said and done in this markedly free thinking country." In April the *Times* observed that only Finland had escaped Communist control. Except for their base at Porkkala, the Russians were invisible in Finland. Although tied within the Soviet orbit by treaty, the *Times* contended that Finland had remained a country with a Western societal structure and a corresponding Western attitude to life. The Finns believed that the 1948 Treaty was an agreement that Finland would be left alone in its domestic affairs if it pledged loyalty to the Soviet Union. The *Times* thought that much suggested that the Finns had been right. The Soviets had not exercised political pressure on Finland and had dealt

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[3] "Decisions in Scandinavia," *Economist*, 26 February 1949, 361; "Final Decision by Norway," *Economist*, 12 March 1949, 457; "Finland Plods On," *Economist*, 23 April 1949, 753-54.

reasonably with Finland on economic matters. "Three out of four Finns," asserted the *Times*, "detest the Soviet Union and its policies and seldom refrain from saying so." The freedom with which the Finns expressed their views was considered remarkable. Unique among the defeated nations, Finland had not been de-Nazified. Prevalent among the Finns was the view that Finland had not been defeated. Stories circulated of secret forest armories with arms for several hundred thousands and underground paramilitary organizations.[4]

Changes in Finland since the war had caused domestic problems. With the resettlement of the Karelian refugees and the subsequent government mandated land redistribution, 81 percent of Finnish farms were under twenty-five acres. The problem of land redistribution was amplified because only 3 percent of Finland was arable.[5] The number of urban workers was increasing to meet the labor requirements of the reparations industries. The Agrarians were conscience of the need to prevent peasant impoverishment while the Social Democrats wanted to reduce costs for the urban consumer. Despite their difficulties, the *Times* said that Finns were confident that they could work out their problems if they were left alone.[6]

Throughout 1950, the *Economist* commented on the political divisions within Finland. It asserted that the Finns had learned the art of being independent of the Soviet Union without being provocative. Although the Finns had reached a consensus on their foreign policy, they were far from agreement on domestic policy. In June the *Economist* mentioned that an unhappy division in Finnish politics existed between the city and the country.

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4 "Scandinavia and the West," *Times*(London), 3 March 1949, p4; "Statecraft in Finland," *Times*(London), 29 April 1949, p5.

5 Royal Institute of International Affairs, *The Scandinavian States and Finland* (Welwyn Garden City, Great Britain: Broadwater Press, 1951), 116.

6 "Statecraft in Finland," *Times*(London), 29 April 1949, p5.

The conflict between townspeople and farmers, asserted the *Economist* in December, was acute. The personal rivalry of Kekkonen, leader of the Agrarian party, with the Social Democrats intensified the feelings of distrust between urban rural interests.[7]

Kingsley Martin, who opposed the NATO military build up, expressed admiration for the Finns in the *New Statesmen*. He observed that the Soviet Union had treated Finland with unexpected leniency since World War II. Finland, he noted, could not arm because of its treaty with the Soviet Union and necessity. Although most Finns hated Russia, Martin asserted that they believed that Norway's adherence to the Atlantic Pact was a mistake and regarded Sweden's neutrality as highly desirable. The Finns had combined prudence with defiance in their relations with the Soviet Union. Martin characterized them as a brave, determined, and proud people who were well aware of their country's delicate relationship with the Soviet Union. He continued that for Finland:

> Every action has to be considered from the point of view of Finnish dignity in relation to her huge neighbor. The Finns are perhaps the least frightened people in Europe. They have fought the Russians and know what war means. They would fight again, if compelled, but they do not court destruction, and they will not surrender their independence. They will live their own way of life trying, within limits of dignity, not to be provocative.[8]

Commenting on their daily lives, Martin asserted that flowers were treasured in Finland as in few other countries, because of the contrast of the flowers' bright colors with the long, dark and dreary Finnish winters. Martin, who judged the Finns to be melancholy but charming, found it hard to rate their

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[7] 'Finns Under Pressure,'" *Economist*, 7 January 1950, 16; "Good Terms for the Finns," *Economist*, 24 June 1950, 1380; "Labor Unrest in Finland," *Economist*, 16 December 1950, 1092; "Political Deadlock in Finland," *Economist*, 23 December 1950, 1152.

[8] Kingsley Martin, "Scandinavian Notes," *New Statesmen and Nation*, 23 June 1951, 703-704.

drinking tolerances because he had found it "comparatively rare to meet a Finn with less than four schnapps and several bottles of beer inside him."[9] Martin's article combined political commentary with personal social observation separate from politics, displaying sympathy for the Finns and reinforcing the stereotype of the hard-drinking Finn.

In 1951, the *Times* praised the Finnish record of self help and their work ethic as they struggled to handle the problems that faced their country. The Finn's accomplishments included: the rebuilding of their export trade; the resettlement of Karelian refugees; industrial expansions; and the improvement of food supplies. "All of these remarkable achievements, asserted the *Times*, "indicate an outstanding record of individual effort." The effort of Finnish industry to master the reparations problem and simultaneously recover export markets was thought to be "a fine example of self help on a national scale."[10]

The *Times* thought that any nation with such a record was not likely to go Communist. Finland was the only country to have had a Communist Prime Minister and Interior Minister, and then dismiss them with an election. The *Times* thought that it might be safe to say that the danger of the spread of Communism had passed. Inflation, however, threatened to undo Finland's postwar economic and social achievements. Suffering under what was perhaps the world's worst inflation, the cost of living in Finland had risen nine times the 1939 price level. After the reparation payments were completed, Finland was faced with the prospect of a massive dislocation of its industrial workers. This danger had been averted by the Soviet Union's agreement to continue to buy Finnish products for six more years. The

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9 Kingsley Martin, 704.

10 "Self Help in Finland," *Times*(London), 12 May 1951, p7.

drawback of the agreement, according to the *Times*, was that the Finnish economy would be tied to the Soviet Union "with hoops of steel."[11]

It was difficult to resettle the 425,000 refugees, of whom 233,750 depended upon agriculture for their livelihood. The *Times* repeated comments that it had made in previous articles that the rocky Finnish soil was poorly suited to cultivation and the size of the farms was small. The Finns could be proud, the *Times* said, of how they had handled the rural upheaval without causing undue social strain. Finland needed to work to prevent peasant impoverishment. Despite the difficulties the Finns faced, the Finnish spirit was determined to overcome them and felt "no need to indulge in sour grapes."[12]

Finland's external dependence, stated the *Times* was the price for its liberty at home. Although the Finns were free, the *Times* insisted that Finland was not independent in the true sense of the word. Finland was tied to the Soviet Union by every bond except political sympathy. The *Times* declared that it was essential for the West to forget the Winter War, which dominated Finnish history in western minds to the exclusion of all else, especially Finland's role as one of the defeated in World War II. The real reason Finland was free, contended the *Times*, was that Russia had nothing to gain by interfering. Its internal freedom was not because Stalin had a soft spot for Finland or because the Russians feared the Finns fighting qualities. Finland had learned the futility of following a foreign policy opposed to **Russian** interests. The *Times* maintained that a real difference existed between Russian interests and Soviet interests but did not elaborate on these differences. Finland was in a tragic predicament, her heart was with the west but her eyes were in the east. Finland was linked with the west, particularly

11 "Self Help in Finland," *Times*(London), 12 May 1951, p7.
12 "Self Help in Finland," *Times*(London), 12 May 1951, p7.

Scandinavia by trade, culture, and education. Finland placed much store in its cultural ties.[13]

In the Finnish parliamentary elections of July, 1951, the Communist received 21.6 percent of the vote, less than either the Social Democrats or the Agrarians.[14] Despite their high inflation, the Finns had rallied, asserted the *Times*, to the defense of democracy and freedom. Finnish democracy had been justified by its works. The Soviets had reasons for restraint, primarily, commented the Times, keeping Sweden out of NATO. According to the *Times* Finns were deserving of assistance. "The Western Powers have some obligation to lend a helping hand to this small but gallant people."[15] In March 1952, Kekkonen advocated a neutral Scandinavian bloc. Controversy about neutrality, the *Times* observed, was as perennial as the seasons in Scandinavia. Whatever their motivations, the Finns were not a Russian satellite.[16]

The *Economist* praised the Finns for completing their reparation payments to the Soviet Union that had seemed to be beyond their ability to pay. The actual cost to Finland of producing and delivering the goods for the Soviet Union, estimated the *Economist*, was $949 million at 1944 price levels. Although forest products were 90 percent of Finland's exports, they were only allowed to account for less than one third of the value of its reparations to the Soviet Union. Though Finland had relieved itself of the burden of reparation payments, it was reliant on the Soviet bloc for future sales for its products. This, along with its geopolitical situation, commented the *Economist*, meant that Finland could hardly hope to translate its pro-Western

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13 "Freedom of Finland,' *Times*(London), 27 April 1951, p7.
14 John Wuorinen, *A History of Finland*, 425.
15 "Finnish Elections," *Times*(London), 6 July 1951, p5.
16 "Policy in the North," *Times*(London), 3 March 1952, p5.

feeling into action. Its new situation was unlikely to change Finland's cautious and ascetic foreign policy. The *Economist* believed that Finland's heart was with the West, even though its "mind," (its accurate appraisal of the political situation) caused it to be neutral.[17]

As the Finns concluded their reparation payments to the Soviet Union, the *Times* noted the staggering amount of the deliveries. The total length of a train hauling all of the reparations would be 2,135 miles and the ships delivered would make a line 18.5 miles long. The *Times* implied that Western Europe in general, and Great Britain in particular, would do well to model themselves after the Finnish work ethic. Western nations trying to afford rearmament for NATO could learn from Finland's "remarkable story." The payments were more onerous than the price indicated because the bill was based on what the Soviet Union wanted, not what Finland had. The *Times* noted that the Finns had made their reparations under harsh conditions: they had lost Karelia's resources, and their manpower had been depleted by the war. They paid with much sacrifice and hardship. The results had a cost, an industrial revolution had occurred overnight in Finland and the effects had not been absorbed. Finland had remained a free country, the *Times* stated, "preserving all the attributes of Western democratic values." Finland's next challenge was to find a world market for its goods.[18]

That Finland had remained independent and democratic was in itself a moral victory. The Winter War image of "Valiant" Finland remained in the Anglo press, but instead of fighting the Communists on skis, the Finns were voting against Communists in elections. The *Times* and the *Economist* paid close attention to political and economic developments in Finland and

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17 "Finland Squares the Account," *Economist*, 20 September 1952, 700.

18 "Finnish Reparation to Russia," *Times*(London), 30 August 1952, p4; "A Finnish Achievement," *Times*(London), 4 September 1952, p4; "Finnish Reparations," *Times*(London), 19 September 1952, p5.

praised its ability to successfully complete its reparation payments. The Anglo press, however, had less favorable praise for Finland than did the American press. Finland stood in stark contrast to the rest of Europe to the American press and public. While the United States was pouring money into Europe via the Marshall Plan, Finland was managing to pay stiff reparations without any Marshall Plan assistance. The American press presented an image of the Finns as an industrious, thrifty, and determined people.

In April, 1949, a *New York Times* article suggested that "the learned" study how the tiny nation of Finland recovered without help. After having fought two wars in five years, the bantam sized country ought, by all rules of common sense, "to be wallowing in despair and its people hungry and discouraged." With no Marshall Plan aid, the *New York Times* declared, "Finland has done the impossible - once more." The United States had given Finland a loan, not a gift. Finland was aware that Russia would not help and that the United States could not. By 1952, the *New York Times* observed that when the rest of Europe would stop getting Marshall Plan aid, Finland would have paid off her debt to the Soviet Union. It implied that Finland would probably be in a better economic condition than those nations that had received Marshall Plan aid from the United States.[19]

Lisa Sergio wrote in the *Nation* that it was clear to anyone who visited Finland that it was not behind the iron curtain. This was because of the Finns' firm and realistic behavior in an almost hopeless situation. Sergio asserted that in September 1944, every adult in the country expected that Finland would be taken over. The Finns were a "mixture of fatalism, cold logic, and courage," that the Russians had learned to respect. Had Sweden

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[19] Finns on Their Feet Despite Two Wars," *New York Times*, 10 April 1949, p 7.

joined NATO, however, Sergio contended that Russia would probably have established bases in Finland whatever the cost.[20]

In August 1949, *Newsweek* commented that the staggering reparation payments had not caused Finland to kneel "under the bear's paw." Finnish resolution had prevented the iron curtain from descending upon them when they removed Communist officials from office in April, 1948. A world-wide shortage of timber products and $127 million in American loans had provided Finland's economic salvation. Finland received a $12.5 million loan from the World Bank, the first World Bank loan to an East European nation. The loan, *Newsweek* insisted, helped bulwark not only Finland's economy, but its freedom.[21]

During the winter of 1950 *Time* said that Finland was the top bidder for self improvement among the Nordic countries. Worried about manners, "particularly the knife brandishing belligerence of Finnish drunks," the Finns had stepped up a courtesy campaign.[22] As in the other Nordic countries, the Finns participated in many organizations. A serious group, the Citizens' Good Behavior Organization, had the goal to make the common Finn a gentleman in time for the 1952 Olympics. *Time* observed that conditions must be improving in Finland as an anti-gluttony campaign was also receiving considerable support. A Finnish tailor had estimated that in the last two years 90 percent of his customers had gotten fatter. Apparently the lean years had passed.[23]

In March, 1950, the *New York Times* explained that the Finns success in maintaining their independence was "due to their demonstrated honesty as

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20 Lisa Sergio, "Finland - Unwilling Satellite," *Nation*, 23 July 1949, 75-77.
21 "Finland, Loan for Freedom," *Newsweek*, 15 August 1949, 36.
22 The stereotype of the hard drinking knife wielding Finn is widespread in Scandinavia and was brought to North America by Scandinavian immigrants.
23 "Gluttony and Glamor," *Time*, 6 February 1950, 55.

well as to their axiomatic courage." The Finns had been as faithful on their payments to Russia as they had on their World War I debt to the United States. The Finns, said a *New York Times* editorial, "have character in the highest sense of the word." The editorial thought that it was "extremely improbable that the Soviets could ever swallow the Finns spiritually," even if they were to occupy the country. Finland, declared the *New York Times*, was no satellite.[24]

A *New York Times* editorial "Invincible Finland," declared that the purge of Finnish Communist leaders, reflecting Moscow's disappointment over the lack of Communist success, "was merely one symptom of the miracle that is postwar Finland." Despite two disastrous defeats, the burden of heavy reparation deliveries, and the presence of Soviet bases in Finland, the editorial remarked that Finland remained independent, defiantly reading American books, and electing non-Communists. The editorial said that it may be argued that the Soviets could end this anytime they wanted and install a Czech style "People's government." Such an argument, the editorial asserted,

> misreads the current situation and gives far too little credit to the patriotic Finnish people. Moscow's 'forbearance' in Finland is that of a wolf who desists from eating foods he has found to be indigestible. Appeasers and 'neutralists' will do well to ponder the lesson of Finnish indigestibility and independence.[25]

Finnish obstinacy, stubbornness, and determination, credited the editorial, were responsible for maintaining Finland's independence.[26]

Helsinki was the host for the 1952 Summer Olympics. The city, reported *Time*, was bustling with activity. Although Russian guns were less

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24 "Finland Keeps Calm," *New York Times*, 19 March 1950, p 8.
25 "Invincible Finland," *New York Times*, 1 April 1951, p 30
26 "Invincible Finland," *New York Times*, 1 April 1951, p 30.

than a dozen miles from Helsinki, *Time* observed that "as in West Berlin, the people who live closest to danger are calmest about it." After discussing Finland's territorial loses to the Soviet Union, *Time* described Finland's remaining land as vast, rugged, and beautiful. Though the Finns were not "Northern ostriches," *Time* said that they closed their eyes to slights and sacrifices as long as they could preserve the essence of their independence. Though Finland had declined Marshall Plan aid, they had accepted a loan from the United States. When questioned about this, Premier Kekkonen said to reporters, "we live on fine distinctions." Saddled in 1944 with the stiffest reparations bill in history, Finland would have the bill paid in full before the end of 1952. *Time* observed: "Finland has emerged from doing the impossible, not naked and bankrupt but riding a wave of prosperity." Finland alone had remained outside the iron curtain. Finland's "characteristically Scandinavian Socialism" had eased the lot of workers everywhere, with wages rising faster than prices. A Finn commented that all of Finland could be found in the three S's: schnapps, sauna, and sisu. The sauna was the hardy Finns' favorite form of relaxation. Schnapps was the national drink. Sisu was an old mystic Finnish word that was untranslatable, denoting guts, the ability to pay debts, rout enemies and beat any odds without fuss or furor. Sisu, declared *Time*, was Finland's answer to Communism.[27]

In September of 1952, a *Minneapolis Tribune* editorial observed that, "Little Finland, unique among nations for its ability to pay debts **good** or **bad,** (emphasis mine) cleared its reparations account with the Soviet Union." The terms for Finland had been so severe, said the *Minneapolis Tribune*, that they made the Allies' treatment of Germany after World War I seem "like a suspended sentence." In 1944 Finland took on the staggering burden of $300

[27] "Sisu," *Time*, 21 July 1952, 24-29.

million in specific products, many of which Finland never produced before, particularly metal goods. Finland, nevertheless, expanded its shipbuilding industry and created a metals industry "from scratch." The editorial commented that the Finns' achievements recalled Churchill's Winter War statement that "only Finland. . . shows what free men can do." Finland faced a new problem, how to keep its expanded industries functioning. The dislocation in Finland, noted the editorial, would be as if the United States were to quit its foreign aid and military spending. Finland needed to find new markets for its goods. The *Minneapolis Tribune* believed that Finland merited special treatment, declaring, "certainly no nation is more deserving of cooperation and assistance in finding those markets than this bastion of freedom in the far north."[28] This was a return to the image of Finland during the Winter War and before, but little or no negative impression from the Continuation War was apparent.

Finland had been praised admiringly in both the Anglo and American Press for meeting its reparation payments to the Soviet Union. The American press particularly drew comparisons to the Finns' payment of its World War I debt to the United States. Though the press recognized Finland as a functioning democracy, they did not consider Finland to be completely independent. The Finns were portrayed as an admirable and hardy people who were fated by their geography to live a bleak life in a bleak environment.

## Press Opinion 1953-1955.

A thaw in the Cold War began in 1953 with the easing of tensions after Stalin's death and end of the Korean conflict. Finland was adjusting to life after reparations and having internal difficulties. With the absence of the outside threat of Soviet intervention that the reparation payments had

28 "Finland Pays off," *Minneapolis Morning Tribune*, 20 September 1952, p 4.

represented, the Finns struggled to deal effectively with the political problems in their own country. Demands had been suppressed since 1939 and now the Finns turned on themselves, the urban consumers and workers against the rural peasants. In the international arena Finland tried to keep a low profile, but it took advantage of the "Geneva Spirit" to assert its neutrality.

In an intriguing article that did not explicitly mention Finland, the *Economist* praised neutrals but not "neutralists." The term neutrals applied to nations whereas the term neutralists referred primarily to political pacifists in Western Europe. Neutrals were trustworthy Samaritans and few of these remained to fill the thankless roles that the world needed. Neutralists, on the other hand, detracted from the maintenance of peace.[29]

The *Manchester Guardian* thought that Finland played a unique function in the world, it acknowledged its place in the Soviet sphere, yet it was left to govern itself democratically in the Western sense. Finland's position was of the greatest importance, contended the *Guardian*, in Sweden's policy and planning. Sweden's neutralists used Finland to justify their policy. The *Guardian* observed the "Northern contrast," the Nordic countries shared a community rooted in history, culture, and ideals; yet the geopolitical situation of a divided world had imposed diversity upon them.[30]

The *Times* stated in May 1954, that it was a good sign that Great Britain would once again be Finland's number one trading partner. The Soviet Union was unable to meet Finland's consumer needs. As Finland's economy drew near to dependence on the Soviet Union, the *Times* commented that its bonds with the West had been threatened. Helsinki's shops were filled with goods from the Soviet bloc that defied "the best efforts of salesmanship." It was difficult in practice for Finland to switch to Western goods because only

29 "Neutrals and Neutralists," *Economist*, 18 April 1953, 141.
30 "Northern Neighbors," *Manchester Guardian Weekly*, 2 December 1954, 8.

the Soviet Union would purchase goods produced by Finland's uneconomic expansion.[31]

In April 1955, the *Economist* stated that Finland had learned how to direct warm smiles and friendly gestures in Moscow's direction while granting a minimum commitment. Finland was of political and strategic importance for the Soviet Union. At the time Finland was economically dependent upon the Soviet Union, but it was as viable as any of the Scandinavian countries, according to the *Economist*. Finland remained a vigorous democracy and, thought the *Economist*, it should be credited for its courageous performance, but it may not be able to hold out indefinitely.[32]

Finland, said the *Manchester Guardian*, was the only "liberated or conquered Soviet border country" that was permitted to be a functioning democracy. The strong ties that Finland had kept with Sweden, contended the *Guardian*, had contributed to the Soviet's agreement to withdraw from Porkkala. The policies of Finland and Sweden had kept Sweden out of NATO and Finland out of the Warsaw Pact. By giving up Porkkala the Soviets had an example of Soviet disarmament to show the world and could buttress the Paasikivi line in Finland.[33] The *Economist* considered the Soviet withdrawal from Porkkala to be a very astute political move. The Soviets were showing a new sophistication. The West may prefer the "good old days" when Soviet policy was exercised without camouflage.[34]

After the Soviets had announced that they would withdraw from Porkkala, the *Times* was quick to point out that Porkkala was not as valuable in the atomic era as it had been in 1944. The Soviet move cost them nothing

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31 "Trade Links with Finland," *Times*(London), 22 May 1954, p7.
32 "Finland asked into the Parlor," *Economist*, 16 April 1955, 185; "The Bear at Finland's Door," *Economist*, 30 April 1955, 363-64.
33 "Peace in a Cold Climate," *Manchester Guardian Weekly*, 15 September 1955, p 8.
34 "Full Marks for Moscow," *Economist*, 24 September 1955, 1019.

and they hoped to reap rewards in Finnish and Scandinavian public opinion, as well as strengthen their bargaining position at Geneva. The Soviets were calling for the abolishment of American bases in Europe. The withdrawal from Porkkala was welcomed, said the *Times*, for the relief it would give to the Finns after years of steadfastness and courage. Paasikivi went to Moscow to sign the documents for the Porkkala withdrawal and the Finnish-Soviet treaty extensions. It was the seventh time that Paasikivi had been to Moscow, but it was the first time he had returned to Finland happy. The Finns believed that their sovereignty had been reaffirmed and their international status enhanced by the return of Porkkala to Finland.[35]

On Christmas Eve, 1955, the Economist observed that in the past year Finland had secured entry into the United Nations and the Nordic Council, and obtained the agreement of the Soviet Union to withdraw its forces from Porkkala. These events proved to the Finns the correctness of Paasikivi's policy: Finland should establish and maintain good relations with the Soviet Union by observing all its obligations but avoid subservience in international affairs and maintain trade and cultural relations with the West. This policy required a cool head in management, but the Finns now seemed to be successfully pursuing it.[36]

After Finland had completed its reparation payments to the Soviet Union, the Anglo press began more frequently to refer to Finland as a unique and or special role in the World. The Anglo press remained concerned about the extent of Finnish trade with the Soviet Union and its effect upon British trade with Finland. The Soviet withdrawal from Porkkala was seen as an effort to gain a public relations advantage over the West. The American press

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35 "Future of Russian Bases in Finland," *Times*(London), 16 September 1955, p 8; "Russian Gesture to Finland," *Times*(London), 19 September 1955, p8; "Foreign Bases," *Times*(London), 19 September 1955, p9; "Russo-Finnish Pact Signed,"*Times*(London), 20 September 1955, p8.
36 "Finland's Wider Windows," *Economist*, 24 December 1955, 1112.

was to treat the Soviet's Porkkala move similarly. The American press also began to identify Finland as a nation that had succeeded despite extremely difficult circumstances.

In January, 1953, Alan Spencer noted in *Foreign Affairs* that Finland had received much attention for its seemingly impossible achievement of paying off Russia, but he believed that the maintenance of democracy in Finland deserved more attention. Early 1948 was critical for Finland. Western morale following the coup in Czechoslovakia was low. Spencer stated that the Finnish character, the "dogged patriotism and bold shrewdness of the Finns," was responsible for the failure of the Communist to take over Finland. The country's coat of arms, he noted, was a Lion that brandished a crusader's sword and trampled a scimitar. The coat of arms clearly symbolized a clash between East and West with Finland being part of the West. Spencer said that capitalist factory owners and business men had assisted the socialists to prevent the communists from gaining the support of more workers. Spencer realized that it paid Russia to leave Finland alone. There were strong grounds, he thought, for a reasonably optimistic view for Finland's future. Its weaknesses were its dependence on a single commodity and a distorted economy. Finland's advantages, Spencer stated, were low defense expenditures and pride.[37]

In 1953, over a year after completing its reparation payments to the Soviet Union, the *New York Times* commented that Finland was running into serious economic difficulties. Finland was outside of the United State's foreign aid program and had borne the terrific burden of $1.8 billion in war damages and reparations. The Finns dependence on the Soviet bloc markets gave the Soviet Union a powerful lever. The *New York Times* thought that

37 Alan Spencer, "Finland Maintains Democracy," *Foreign Affairs Quarterly*, January 1953, 301-309.

the United States and the West should consider additional measures to keep Finland out of "Soviet clutches."[38] The reality, however, was that had the Soviet Union wanted to take Finland, the United States would not have intervened militarily to prevent it.

The Finnish-American historian John Wuorinen stated in *Foreign Affairs* that the steadiness of the Finnish character, made their elections seem the most predictable in the world. By now, Wuorinen claimed, Finland occupied a special position. It had not been destroyed by internal Communist initiatives or "economic blood letting." He stated that Finland was not a Soviet hostage and the Soviet Union was content with it. Nevertheless, he admitted, that some 430,000 Finns had voted Communist in 1954 national elections, and the Communist maintained 43 out of the 200 seats in the Eduskunta. This baffling support could not be explained entirely by proportional representation. The number of Red voters greatly exceeded party membership, so other Finns, thought Wuorinen, must have viewed the Communists as a protest vehicle or expected that the party could produce desired results. Prestige remained for the immediate postwar appeal of the Soviet Union's propinquity. Also, anti-Communist activities were difficult in Finland and the Communist functioned under the name of "People's Democrats." Wuorinen contended that at a time when the United States was unable to prevent Red expansion in Korea and Indo-China, abandoning Finland and Sweden would be appeasement with "fatal consequences." Finland was a frontier to be defended. Wuorinen argued that "Morality and military security suggest the West put a 'no trespassing' sign at Finland's border."[39]

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38 "Finland's Plight," *New York Times*, 27 November 1953, p 26.

39 John Wuorinen, "Finland Stands Guard," *Foreign Affairs Quarterly*, July 1954, 651-660.

In April of 1955, Robert Haeger wrote in *Newsweek* that it suited Russia's purposes for Finland to remain a free country. The "Honest" and "Valiant" images of Finland underlined Haeger's analysis of Finnish traits which he said were trustworthiness and grit. The Finns, he recalled, had paid their World War I debts to the last penny and fought the Russians to a standstill on skis. Finland was tied to the East economically, yet was determined to maintain its independence. Haeger stated that Finland's economy was permanently distorted and consequently hopelessly tied to Soviet markets. For example, the Finnish metals industry prices were 30 percent above world levels. The Finns remained officially aloof from the Nordic Council because of Soviet denouncements yet the Finns participated in the common Northern labor market that provided for reciprocal social benefits and travel between the Nordic countries without passports. Haeger asserted that what the Finns wanted was Swedish style neutrality.[40]

The Soviet Base at Porkkala had lost much of its value, and the Soviets could retake it without great difficulty. The *Minneapolis Tribune* stated that though it was good that Finns were to be relieved of the burden and humiliation of Russian occupation, the withdrawal was not a disinterested act of magnanimity. The Porkkala withdrawal was part of a Soviet peace offensive to get the United States out of Europe. If the Soviets succeeded, Porkkala would indeed be a small price to pay. The *Minneapolis Tribune* insisted that American bases in Europe were not comparable to the Soviet base at Porkkala.[41]

Hansson Baldwin wrote in the *New York Times* that the Soviets' Porkkala gesture had "major propaganda and psychological importance but

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[40] Robert Haeger, "Finland: Survival in a Soviet Shadowland," *Newsweek*, 11 April 1955, 56.

[41] "A Base for Base," *Minneapolis Morning Tribune*, 20 September 1955, p 6.

no strategic significance." A *New York Times* editorial also discussed the implications of the Soviet withdrawal from Porkkala. The editorial commented that Finland was, as Khrushchev had previously said, a small country and the Soviets were pursuing larger aims. The Soviet's ambitious goal was the removal of American forces based overseas. If the Soviets were successful, then a token retreat of a few miles could open up continents to further Soviet expansion. The editorial declared that there was no possible doubt of Finland's Western orientation.[42]

*Newsweek*'s Ernest Lindley regarded Finland as a "hopeful anomaly" in postwar Soviet policy: Finland had not been Communized. It stood alone among nations that the Soviet Union held in its grip, and no puppet regime had been imposed. Lindley observed that the trade arrangements between the Soviet Union and Finland were eminently satisfactory for Moscow. It appeared the Soviets benefited more from their Finnish Policy than their Eastern Europe policy. The Soviet's Finnish policy had given the Soviets economic benefits and the Finns were not rebellious, Sweden had remained neutral, and Finland was not a sore issue of East versus West. Lindley thought that Finland demonstrated a workable alternative to Stalin's actions in Eastern Europe. Finland in fact represented the pattern that Franklin Roosevelt had hoped for after World War II of independent and freely elected governments in Eastern Europe that were not hostile to the Soviet Union. With the Soviets returning Porkkala, Finland's situation, said Lindley, though less than ideal, was honorable. He contended that the Finnish people and their political institutions were compatible with the conscience of the free

42 Hansson Baldwin, "The Porkkala Gesture," *New York Times*, 20 September 1955 p 7; "In the Soviet Design," *New York Times*, 22 September 1955, p 22.

world. The Soviet Union, he argued, should do the same for Eastern Europe that it had done for Finland.[43]

## Summation

From the Winter War until 1955, Finland was seemingly in a state of constant crisis. After years of struggling for survival, Finland had successfully dealt with the problems of resettlement and reparations. As 1955 ended, Finland was poised to concentrate on self-improvement and raising its standard of living along the lines of its Nordic neighbors. The young nation sought a return to normalcy that had not existed for a generation. The Paasikivi line was established as Finnish foreign policy and appeared to be accepted by both the East and the West. The conceptions of Finland in the Anglo and American press were favorable. They portrayed Finland as a democratic nation that shared "Western" values but that circumstances did not allow it to exercise a pro-West foreign policy. The return of Porkkala, though highly valued in Finland, was quickly discounted by the Anglo and American press as a Soviet public relations ploy. The Anglo press explained Finland's continued independence as the most expedient course of action for the Soviet Union. The American press, however, would often credit Finnish resolve. Though little attention was paid to daily life in Finland, when events brought attention to Finland they were often events of significant achievement, in which Finland appeared to be extraordinary and exceptional when compared to other nations thought to be in similar circumstances. The Anglo and American press identified Finland as a special case.

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[43] Ernest Lindley, "Hopeful," *Newsweek*, 26 September 1955, 38.

## VI. CONCLUSION

This thesis has shown that the West's image of Finland and its policy towards Finland as portrayed by the Anglo and American press was indeed a case in the framework of power politics and diplomacy. This study has also shown that during the Winter War the Anglo and American press exalted Finland as a heroic nation, but both the United States and Great Britain had higher priorities than to help Finland. This thesis demonstrated that during the Continuation War the Anglo and American press partly explained Finland's co-belligerency with Nazi Germany by distinguishing between the Finnish people and the Finnish government. From World War II to 1955, this thesis has shown that the press image of the Finnish people was consistently positive despite Finland's co-belligerency with Germany in the Continuation War and its neutralist policy during the Cold War. This examination of the popular press in Great Britain and the United States reveals that although the countries were allies in World War II and the Cold War, some differences occurred in their respective coverage of Finland, as their national interests diverged.

This thesis strongly suggests that Soviet interests in Finland and Scandinavia were defensive, not expansionistic. The Soviet Union was concerned with its security, not spreading communist ideology. The United States and Great Britain did not recognize this during the Cold War. The Anglo and American press often speculated as to why the Soviet Union had not absorbed Finland. This thesis supports the view of the Scandinavian

balance theory. The Soviets did not want to upset the peaceful status quo in Scandinavia after World War II.[1]

From the Winter War of 1939-1940 until the Soviets agreed to withdraw from Porkkala in 1955, the Finns and the world witnessed a period of great change and transition among the Great Powers. The coverage of Finland in the Anglo and American press during this time not only revealed the turbulent events of Finnish history, but existence of subtle differences of interest between the United States and Great Britain. The difficulty of small nations caught between Great Powers is underscored. Finland's basic policy, preservation of its own independence, never changed. In pursuing this policy, however, Finland was to see itself in political alignments that contradicted the interests of the Western democracies. Finland went from being a heroic defender of Western civilization to an ally of Nazi Germany. The Cold War was to once again find Finland not aligned with the West. Finland had determined that it would follow the Paasikivi Line and try to maintain cordial and peaceful relations with the Soviet Union.

Nevertheless, in the Anglo and American press coverage of Finland, an underlying reservoir of good will is apparent. Finland is a small power on the periphery of Europe that can not by itself be an influential military or economic power, and consequently it was rarely in the public eye. When it was brought to the attention of the Western press, however, it was often by exceptional circumstances. Finland was the only nation to pay its World War I debt to the United States, continuing to pay throughout the Great Depression. Finland fought the Soviet Union alone in the Winter War and received tremendous sympathy from the Western democracies. Finland

[1] See Max Jacobson, *Finnish Neutrality*, 91-101, for a discussion of the Scandinavian balance theory.

found itself once more at war against the Soviet Union in 1941, but this time the Soviet Union was fighting against Germany and with the Allies. After World War II the Finns remained a functioning democracy despite having lost two wars to the Soviet Union. After the Czech crisis in 1948, Finland did not suffer the same fate as Czechoslovakia, despite expectations in the press that it would. And while Western Europe was receiving economic aid from the United States, Finland paid off its reparations to the Soviet Union. These few events served to create and reinforce images of Finland that Berry has described as "Honest" and "Valiant" Finland.

Finland offers an intriguing case for thought and reflection. Issues are not always simple, but Great Powers seek to simplify issues as right or wrong to justify their own particular interests. After Great Britain declared war on Finland in 1941, Mannerheim said that the Finns took it "as a sign that morality no longer had any meaning in high politics."[2] It is no accident that it has been small nations that have taken the lead in developing international law and international organizations. No justice can exist in world where, to paraphrase Thucydides, the powerful take what they can. Finland's history from 1939 to 1955 offers a ray of hope for other small powers caught in the orbit of a powerful neighbor that they can survive and retain some measure of independence. Though Finland's foreign policy has been dictated by Soviet security concerns, it has retained domestic autonomy, its own culture and its own institutions.

The press also tends to simplify events, often to serve a particular agenda. In 1968 Max Jakobson, Finnish diplomat and United Nations' representative, wrote that the West's prevailing image of Finland continued to be based upon the Winter War. Since then the Finns had lived "virtually

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2 Mannerheim, *The Memoirs of Marshall Mannerheim*, 438.

incognito" among the nations of Europe, creating a gap between the traditional image and reality.[3] The image of Finland in the Anglo and American press contained errors and exaggerations of Finnish reality. The American press waxed eloquently about Finnish sisu, but the Soviet Union did not allow Finland to remain independent out of fear of Finland. The Soviet Union followed a policy that it thought would achieve Soviet interests. Had the Soviet Union occupied Finland, then neutral Sweden would have joined NATO and the Soviet Union would have enemy forces uncomfortably close in the Baltic. Besides keeping Sweden out of NATO, Soviet policy towards Finland provided them with good propaganda for the Third World and Western Europe as a successful model of "peaceful coexistence."

It is surprising that a single small country could captivate the press of Great Britain and the United States. Consider the obstacles against Finland's popularity. The Finnish language is not related to the Germanic and Romance languages of Europe and therefore is rarely learned by non-native speakers. Finland's own population has always been small and the Finns have never had a large immigrant population in the United States. Presently less than 0.3 percent of Americans claim any Finnish ancestry.[4] Notwithstanding their very small numbers in the United States, the Finns have had a fairly high profile in the mining and forest industries in the upper Midwest and certainly more so than in Great Britain.

How can one account for Finland's positive image? In the Anglo and American press Finland's image was often a function of the state of relations

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[3] Max Jakobson, *Finnish Neutrality*, 1.

[4] United States Bureau of the Census, *Statistical Abstract of the United States: 1993*, (Washington, D.C.), 1993, 51. In the 1990 census 659,000 people identified themselves as being of some or all Finnish ancestry out of the United States' population of 248,710,000.

between the Soviet Union and the West, but not exclusively so. Individuals, as well as Great Powers and the press, like to simplify issues and opinions. The Winter War alone was not responsible, for the heroic images it evoked of "Valiant" Finland no longer had any relationship to the realities of the Continuation War and the Cold War. Finland was appealing to the intellectuals who were acquainted with the musical works of Sibelius and academic circles were captivated by the *Kalevala*, the national Finnish epic. These groups, though small, were the influential groups that the journalists and editors of the periodicals covered in this study frequently belonged to. The Olympic exploits of Paavo Nurmi in the 1920s received international attention and provided a positive image of Finland among the general public. Finland's harsh and inhospitable climate and geography make life there difficult and hard work is a prerequisite for mere survival. The press described the Finns as stolid, determined, obstinate, even fascists and socialists, but no one called the Finns lazy. All these intangibles combined with images from Finland's debt payment and the Winter War to form and reinforce a positive image of the Finnish people.

Since Finland was a small power with no prospect of being anything else, praising the characteristics of the Finnish people would harm the national pride of neither Great Britain nor the United States. Both nations could praise the Finns without abandoning any pretense of their own national greatness. Both the Anglo and American press saw the Finns as exhibiting characteristics that the press regarded as admirable traits of their own country. "Little Finland" could be regarded as an honorable "little brother" by both the British and the Americans. The Finnish work ethic and the Finn's gallantry in the Winter War appealed to the fading Victorian values of British society. The Finns rugged individualism and outdoor

lifestyle appealed to America's romanticism of the frontier in addition to Finland's reputation in the United States as an honorable debtor. The American press and people have a great love for the underdog and Finland fit that role. Another reason for the reservoir of good will for Finland is its association with the other Scandinavian countries and the generally positive impression of Scandinavia in the United States and Great Britain. The Nordic countries have a reputation for having a high standard of living, and they live quietly in peace with other.

The Anglo and American press coverage of Finland also revealed changes that were occurring in Great Britain and the United States. Berry stated that international relations is primarily the resolution of domestic tensions in an international context.[5] The British press revealed the psyche of an Empire that recognized itself to be in decline whereas the American press reflected the United States' prewar isolationism and its postwar ascendancy. Great Britain suffered terribly in World War II and had a very slow and difficult recovery. The British, who were victorious in the war may have thought that the Finns, who had been on the losing side, did not have it so bad. The United States, however, was exuberantly enjoying an economic prosperity that it has never known before or since. The United States interest in Finland was geopolitical, but it was the Anglo press that more frequently refer to the relationship of Finland to Sweden and the other Nordic nations. The British were more concerned with their own wartime survival and following the war, their own economic recovery. The American press tended to be more favorable towards Finland than the British, and the American press also presented a more simplified image with less detailed coverage.

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[5] R. Michael Berry,*American Foreign Policy and the Finnish Exception,* 454.

Americans are prepared by their history for expansion, asserts Berry, if not geographically at least economically and ideologically. As Americans find it difficult to think in terms of limits, they have tended to conclude that recognition of the status quo contains the seeds of decline. He finds it ironic, "that if the debt payment image of of the 1930s stood for what Americans hoped the world would become, the Finlandization image of the Cold War era became a symbol of what Americans feared the future held."[6] The Americans and British misread Soviet intentions as being motivated by ideological expansionism rather than national security. This caused the Americans and the British to speak disparagingly of "Finlandization," fearing that the Soviet Union could effectively "neutralize" Western Europe.

Considering how geopolitical reality bound Finland, a democratic nation with a free market economy, to the Soviet Union, Finland's coverage in the Anglo and even more so in the American press, could indeed be regarded as a special case. The Finnish people were consistently regarded positively, though many times their policy and particular traits were criticized. Hints of guilt are detectable in the Anglo and American press that the West could not "rescue" Finland from the Soviet Union. Their seems to be an assumption that Finland wants to be "one of us" but is destined by geography not to be. This assumption reveals a certain degree of ethnocentrism. What Finland wanted was to be allowed to pursue its own interests as they saw fit, and avoid being caught constantly in a tug of war between Great Powers. After having made mistakes along the way and suffering from tragic misfortune, Finland had managed to survive, and that in itself is a success story. Daily survival, however, is not very dramatic, and,

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6 Berry, *American Foreign Policy and the Finnish Exception*, 435.

therefore, was not the Finnish story that captured the attention of the Anglo and American press.

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